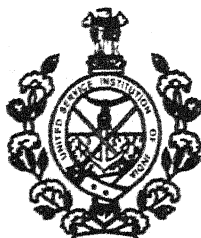


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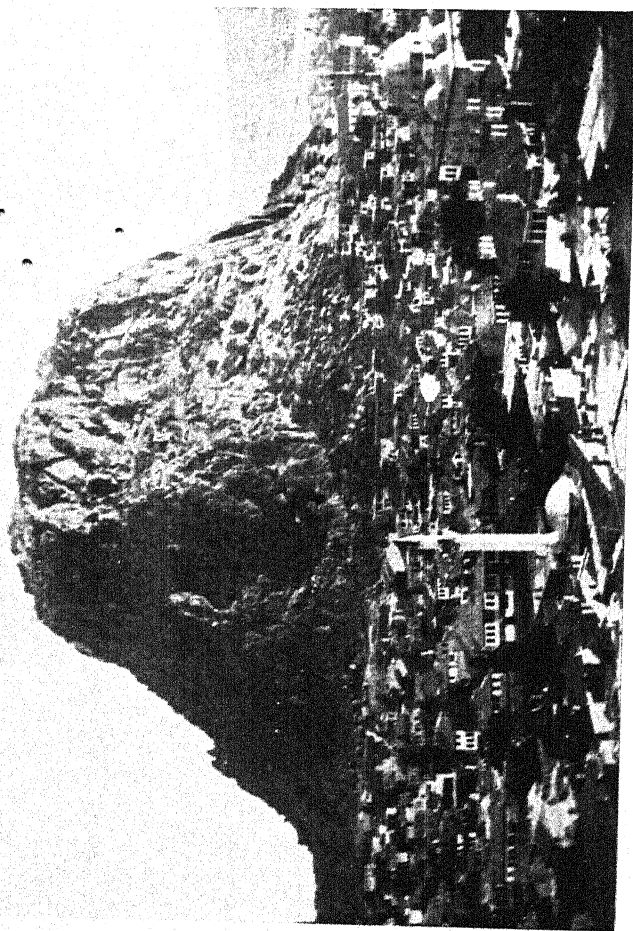
TALES OF TURKEY

*By the Same Author*

IN KUT AND CAPTIVITY,  
With the Sixth Indian  
Division. Maps and  
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AFTUN KARAHISSAR.

*Frontispiece*

# TALES OF TURKEY

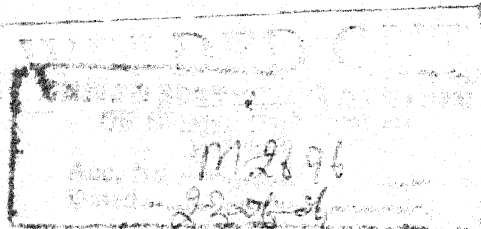
BY MAJOR E. W. C. SANDES

D.S.O., M.C., R.E.

AUTHOR OF

"IN KUT AND CAPTIVITY WITH THE SIXTH INDIAN DIVISION"

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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TO  
MY WIFE





## PREFACE

LET me first explain that this book is no record of battle and sudden death, though it may deal with murder. Also it bears no resemblance to "The History of the Umteenth Platoon" or "With the Blankshires in Pogoland," which may be good reading for the soldier, but lacking in interest to the general public. Search its pages, gentle reader, and you will not find a single story of warfare. And having thus reassured you, I may add that it is merely a collection of tales of adventure, intended to describe the strange people of a strange land—the Turks of Anatolia—with a few remarks on other nationalities found in Turkey. It may help you to pass some idle moments without much brain fatigue ; and whatever the stories lack in the telling, they have at least the merit of truth.

The period of these adventures is that of the Great War ; and the incidents occurred when the author, and others, were prisoners of war. To that extent they are connected with war. But Anatolia is a country into which it is unsafe to penetrate deeply except under a strong guard and as the ' guests '—willing or unwilling—of the Ottoman Government ; so, as an unwilling

guest of the past, who outstayed his welcome, I will describe what I saw in the parts of Turkey usually veiled from the world.

It has become the fashion of late for Miss Phyllis Vere de Vere to leave her home in Mayfair, rigged out in an entrancing costume from the West End, and to dash into the unknown for a month or two, to the anxiety of the police of the savage country favoured with her patronage ; and she then pens a volume entitled " Wanderings in the Wilds of Wembley," in which she exhibits the results of her study of the people and their customs. Or Mr. Smith-Brown, M.P. for Batterling North, journeys ponderously eastwards and spends three weeks on tour in Bubblistan, where he is primed by carefully selected and imaginative natives with a mass of information to form the foundation of a book entitled " All About the Bubbles of Bubblistan : their History and Customs." Few men, however, can truly describe a country or a nation till they have lived among the common people in that country for several years and have observed them under all conditions and in all moods.

In writing these tales of the Near East it is unfortunate that I cannot introduce either a heroine, or a sheik with camels, flashing eyes, and jewelled scimitar ; and for these omissions I must crave pardon from the younger generation. But if my narrative, sometimes sad and sometimes gay, throws a ray or two of light on

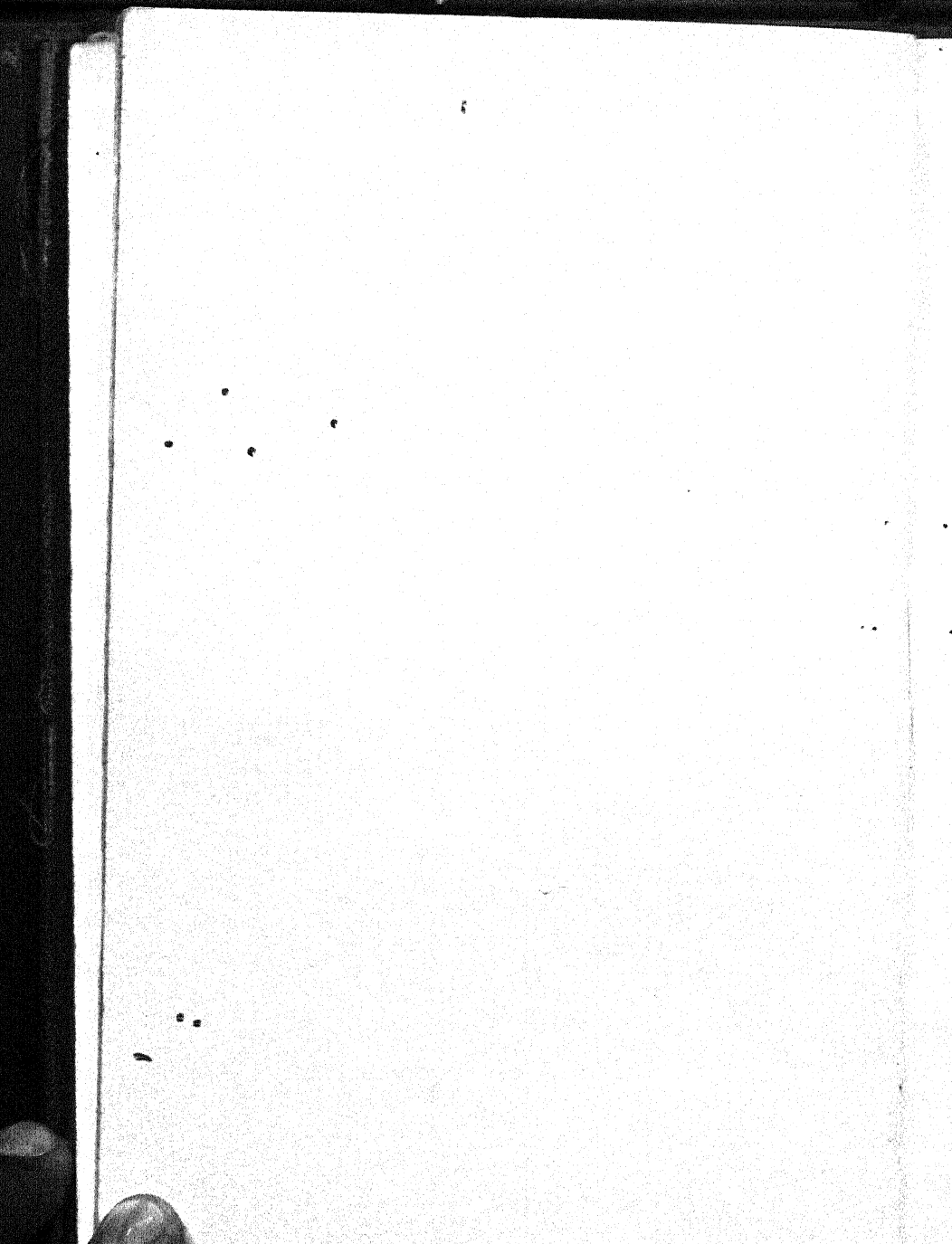
a country which is now much in the public eye, I shall feel that my two and a half years in Turkey were well spent, and shall leave to Mr. Smith-Brown and Miss Vere de Vere the task of completing what I have unworthily begun.

E. W. C. S.



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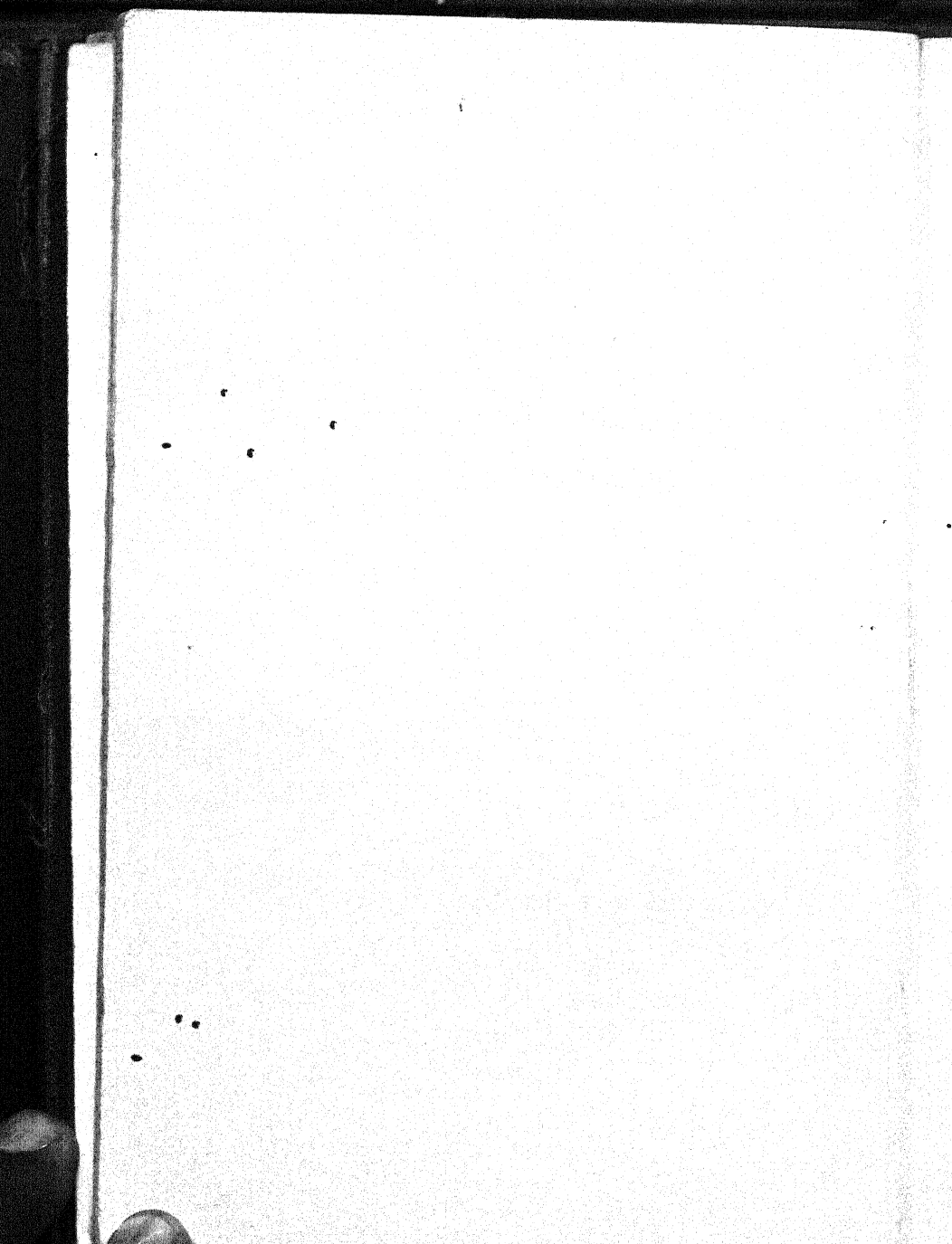
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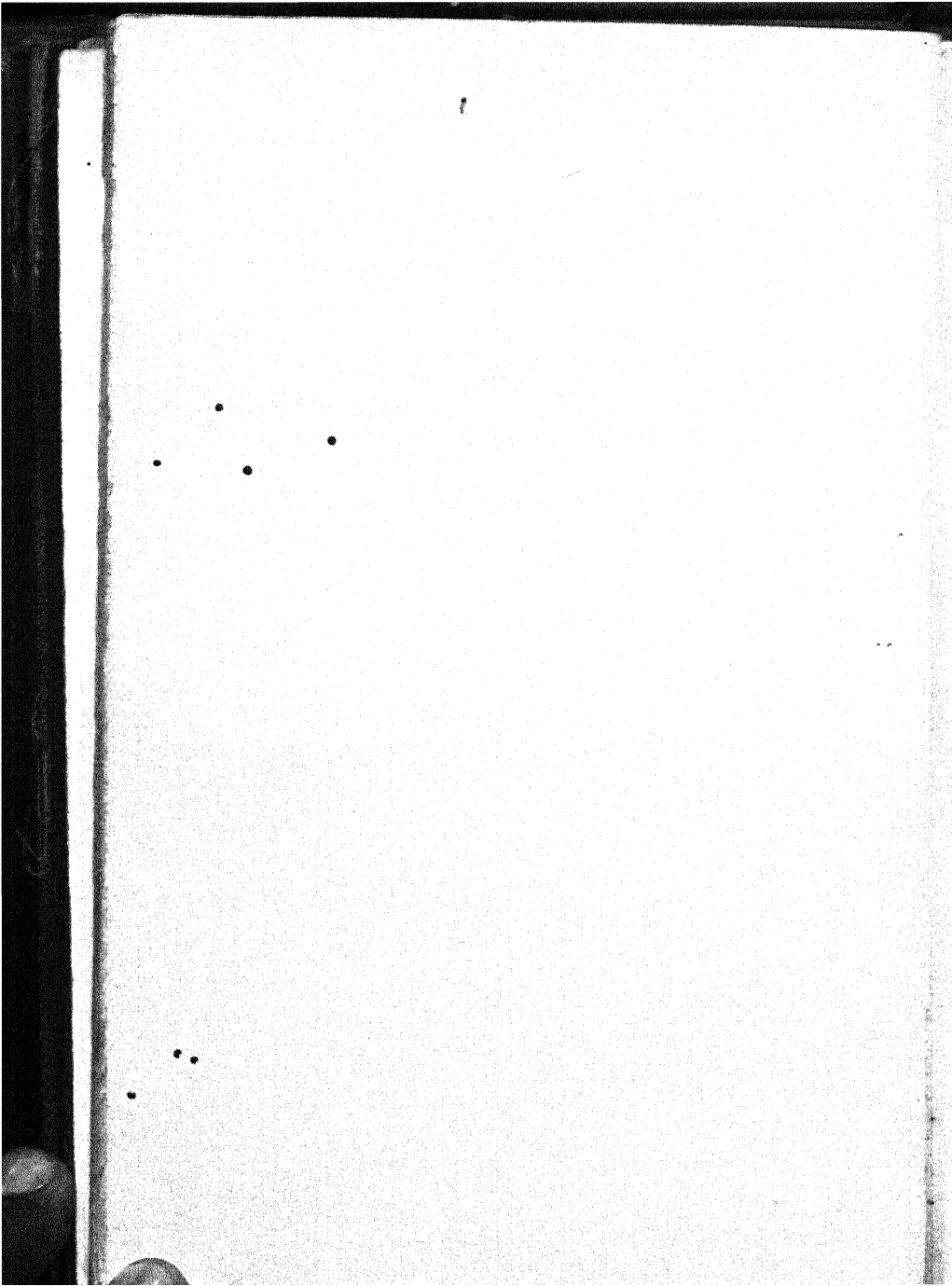
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# TALES OF TURKEY

## CHAPTER I

### ENTER, THE TURKS

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle  
Are emblems of deeds which are done in their clime,  
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,  
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime ?

BYRON.

IN a corner of the map of Europe, south of the Black Sea, is a blank white area of Asian territory, which attracted little attention till the Germans upset the world. That desolate expanse is Anatolia. Travellers could probably describe the position of Smyrna, and possibly even of Angora ; and they might have heard of Konia. But what of Afiun Karahissar, Yozgad and Sivas ? Yet Anatolia is a remarkable country, inhabited by a peculiar people—a country full of historical associations, a country of rugged mountains, dazzling sunshine, occasional rippling streams, and, here and there, a crowded town sheltering in a deep valley from the icy blasts of winter and separated from its neighbours by almost uninhabited tracts of wilderness.

The interior of Anatolia gives the impression of the utmost desolation. Vast tracts of upland, with a fine climate, have been allowed to run to waste through the indolence, destructiveness, and consequent poverty, of a still medieval race. No nation but the Turks has had the chance of developing such a country, but it has not been developed. It has remained a prey to the sword, famine, pestilence, and poverty, held by the strong right arm of a war-like people lacking the initiative for trade and the ability to develop the great natural resources at their disposal. It is of this remarkable land that I propose to write, for it was in this land that I, and many others, spent several years of our lives in monotonous captivity.

Let me first describe the Turks themselves. In any country you care to name you will find good men and bad men, and Turkey is no exception. In Anatolia we met Turks who were gentlemen, or who gave that impression on first acquaintance, and we ran across others who were undoubtedly villains; but taking the average Turk of the peasant class as an example, I admit that he has many good qualities. I say, advisedly, the Turk of the *peasant* class, for he differs as much from the educated Turk of Constantinople as chalk from cheese. In writing of a people whom one has observed for years from the unfortunate view-point of a prisoner of war it is difficult to be impartial, but time has dimmed the memory of many petty in-

dignities and hardships to which officer prisoners of war were subjected—often unintentionally, I believe—and it is easier now to take a broad view of the subject. The case of the treatment of the rank-and-file prisoners is very different and will be dealt with later.

The Anatolian peasant, who becomes the Turkish private soldier at the bidding of Constantinople, is brave, good-tempered, and wonderfully hardy. Probably he can neither read nor write. He dreads the power of the clique at Stamboul, who hold his destiny in their hands. But he is a *man*, and as such commands respect. Generally a cheery, simple soul, fond of a joke, patient in adversity, and dogged in defeat, he is devoted to his family and is quite content to live a quiet life on his little plot of land if allowed to do so. Not for him the wild rush of modern civilised life or the allurements of great cities. His fertile soil produces all that he wants, and his only troubles are the rapacious demands, in money or kind, of the local officials and the local brigands, both of whom must be appeased if he is to avoid prison or death. He has few comforts, but he wants little. His country is bleak and barren, and his life is hard, yet the rigours of his existence make him strong and self-reliant, though sometimes cruel like the bitter storms which sweep his native land in winter. Apart from the universal system of bribery which permeates the country, the Turkish peasant is usually

honest and follows the teachings of Mahomet without undue bigotry.

I do not wish to dwell at length on another and deplorable side of the Turkish character, that is to say, the savagery which has led to the massacre of thousands of Armenian men, women, and children. The Turkish peasant is not civilised, and he has little regard for human life. If he is ordered to kill people, he does so and asks no questions ; but, though he commits the actual murder, the blame rests more with his superiors who order him to murder. There is undying enmity between the Turks and the Armenians, fostered on the one hand by the savage actions of the former, and fanned on the other hand by the cunning duplicity of the latter. It amounts to this, that the clever Armenian swindles the Turk, so the warlike Turk welcomes an order to slay the Armenian. The Turk is a born fighter and the Armenian a born trader. They are utterly unlike and bitterly antagonistic.

Once, during a walk at Afium Karahissar, two British officers evaded the escort and strayed into a vineyard, where they met an old Turkish *chowkidar* armed with a blunderbuss.

" Who are you ? " he asked.

" British officers," they replied.

" Oh ! British officers, are you ? Then you are prisoners ? Now tell me, how was it your throats were not cut when you surrendered ? *The throats of all prisoners should be cut at once.*" (This with an expressive gesture.) " But it is

too late to cut yours now, so you had better have some grapes !”

He then loaded them with a dozen bunches of fine grapes and refused with scorn an offer of payment. What can one think of such a curious blend of kindness and savagery? That old peasant was not joking. He merely stated what he considered to be the correct and sensible procedure towards prisoners in general, even though he felt friendly to them. I relate this tale as one example of the Turkish character.

The Turkish officer is very different from the peasant, but among the officers themselves are widely divergent types. There is the loquacious, polite, and perfumed young spark from Constantinople, dashing, debonair, and with a profound contempt for everything east of the Bosphorus. Unreliable, agnostic, and apeing the Parisian, he may be an amusing study for leisure moments, but he commands no respect. Again, there is the dour, semi-educated, bigoted, and swarthy officer of partly Arab extraction. He is kept, by the powers that be, in the interior of Anatolia or the wilds of Mesopotamia. He does the dirty work, and to him come many kicks and few shekels unless he can manage to get a strangle-hold on some wealthy Armenian. Callous, and often brutal, it was to this type of officer that much of the ill-treatment of our rank and file was due. But there are also, in Turkey, men of a third and very different type, and you will find them here and there. These are the



gallant and earnest patriots, devoted to their work and striving for the advancement of their country. Gentlemen and sportsmen, though so few in number, they do what they can to correct the apathy and corruption of the general run of their educated countrymen.

Let me tell of two excellent Turkish officers. I was in the desert south of Mosul with the first echelon of British and Indian officer-prisoners from Kut. We had finished a long and trying march, and were ordered by an Arab gendarme officer to bivouac on a filthy site far from any water, though we protested and pointed out that a good site was near at hand on the bank of the Tigris. The Arab then produced a whip, abused us, and hit one British officer over the head. Just as a serious row had started, a young Turkish staff officer of the regular cavalry rode up and asked in good French what was amiss. When we explained what had happened, he seized the Arab officer by one foot, dragged him from the saddle, ordered him off to Mosul, and apologised profusely to us for the fellow's barbarity. The Arab slunk off crestfallen, and our deliverer then said that he had been an honorary member of the Cavalry Club when in London and had had the best time of his life while there. He regretted very much to meet English officers again under such unfortunate circumstances. An educated man, I should say, and a smart soldier in appearance.

One other case of a good Turkish officer. An elderly *kaimakam* (lieutenant-colonel) took charge of the officer-prisoners' camp at Afium Karahissar in the summer of 1918. He was rough and uneducated, but he accepted our word of honour not to escape when out for a walk. Three officers got away in disguise one day from the camp itself, and two were recaptured after a few days and brought back for judgment. The Turkish commandant told them that he was going to shoot them, as they must have escaped while out for a walk and had thus broken their word. He added, however, that if they would describe how and when they went, he might accept their explanation that they had escaped from the camp, and reduce the sentence to simple imprisonment. His purpose being palpably to ensure that no other prisoners should escape in future in the sameway, the two recaptured officers refused to describe their method, dared him to do his worst, and stated that they had not broken their word but had escaped legitimately from the camp. The commandant then suddenly beamed on them and said : " Although I cannot understand how you did it, I accept your word of honour that you escaped as you say. I congratulate you on your enterprise and on your bravery in refusing to disclose how you got away. If I was a young man and a prisoner, I should make the attempt just as you have done, and it is with the greatest regret that I must sentence you to ten days' simple im-

prisonment by order of the Government." He then shook hands with them. Now, any escape of prisoners brought the wrath of Constantinople upon the commandant concerned, but this officer put that matter aside and showed his admiration for bravery in his enemies. If Turkey had many such men there would be hope for her future.

But the majority of the Ottoman officers were not of this character. The commandant of the prisoners at Yozgad—a major of artillery—was in league with his own interpreter and his cook-orderly in a hunt for hidden Armenian treasure. This senior *bimbashi*, the young Jewish linguist, and the old cook, had a mutual agreement as to each other's share in any treasure they found, and they watched each other like cats, each trying to keep the others in order by threats of exposure or blackmail. Again, at Yozgad our young *mulazim* (lieutenant) suddenly announced that we could have no more walks as his boots were worn out and he could not accompany us. We said we would buy him a new pair, and collected 40 *liras* (about £25). He demurred on the subject of the purchase, maintaining that he would prefer to buy the boots himself. Well knowing what this meant, we agreed. The weekly walk was worth the money. The *mulazim* took the £25, but he never bought the boots. He knew it was a bribe, and he knew that *we* knew it was a bribe; but the degrading word was never mentioned, so honour was satisfied.

One more instance of this outstanding feature of the Turkish character. At Angora an officer in one echelon of prisoners wished to exchange into another echelon where his brother happened to be. He approached the mulazim of his echelon with this request. The Turk considered deeply.

First he said he wouldn't,  
Then he said he couldn't,  
Then he whispered "Well, I'll see."

The applicant continued to urge his request, and at last the mulazim remarked, "Well, I'll arrange it. But I am to leave this echelon to-morrow, *so you must pay me at once.*"

Admitting that Turkey had probably sent all her best officers to the Dardanelles, Mesopotamia, or Syria, it must be conceded that the remnants employed in guarding the prisoners in Anatolia were surprising to the European mind. It takes time to become accustomed to tipping a man in authority, and the gratuity had to be bestowed so tactfully that the preliminaries were most delicate. We hated the system and despised the recipients, but nothing could be got without a *quid pro quo*.

No better illustration can be given of the savage side of the Turkish character than that provided by the fate of the unfortunate garrison of Kut-el-Amarah which surrendered to the Turks in 1916 after a siege of nearly five months. The annals of the British Empire do not record a greater tragedy than this surrender. The events which

led to it need not be discussed, for they are well known, but the conduct of the Turks after the surrender should be described. Three out of every five British soldiers who surrendered at Kut died before release. They perished in misery and slavery, their bodies were stripped and thrown into nameless graves, and no burial service was allowed to be read over them. Their Indian comrades-in-arms — particularly the Mahomedans — fared better, but the long trail from Kut to Anatolia was marked at every mile by the whitening bones or the shallow graves of the soldiers of Townshend's force; and those who struggled through to the Taurus, and beyond, succumbed wholesale to the onslaught of pneumonia and typhus in the bitter cold of the railway-camps in winter. They were incapable of work in their starved condition; yet they were forced to their work by blows and curses, shivering, fever-stricken, and dying. Their plight was carefully hidden from the outside world, and in the darkness of despair they sank and died, to the eternal shame of Turkey.

When the garrison of Kut, 13,000 strong, surrendered to the Turkish army under Khalil Pasha on April 29th, 1916, all food-supplies had been exhausted, and the men were so sick and starved that further resistance was impossible. The ill-clad and poorly fed Turkish army encircling Kut and resisting the Relief Force was suddenly called upon to take charge of all these prisoners, but was incapable of making proper

arrangements for them. Khalil Pasha had sufficient difficulty in supplying his 30,000 men with food and munitions brought by the five Turkish ships plying between Baghdad and Kut ; and the result was that the sudden addition of 13,000 men to his ration strength taxed his resources beyond the breaking-point and led to the tragedies which followed the surrender. Nevertheless it must have been apparent to him for several weeks that a surrender was probable, and that it was advisable to accumulate stores by hook or by crook in view of that probability ; yet there is nothing to show that he took any action in the matter. With typically Turkish indifference to suffering, he allowed the morrow to look after itself.

The Turkish doctors inspected the sick in hospital, and over 1,000 men were released on exchange ; but among them were only four British officers and 100 British other ranks, and the enemy demanded a fit Turkish soldier for every British or Indian invalid. No British officer or soldier was released unless he was at death's door. Several men, to whom release was refused, died in captivity within three days. Still, fortune smiled on some men. An Indian hospital orderly was sleeping among a few serious cases already marked for exchange. The Turks, all keenness at first but soon apathetic, merely glanced at him and marked him also for exchange. He was indeed a lucky man, for he was quite fit !

The Turkish infantry who marched into Kut spread rapidly over the town and posted pickets at various places to keep order among the Arabs and to guard the prisoners. The Arabs feigned the greatest joy. They danced and sang, and kissed the boots of the Turkish officers, who retaliated by kicking them in the face. They tried their utmost to curry favour with the victors, but as soon as most of the prisoners had been removed to Shumran, the Turks began their vengeance. Every man who was denounced by the enemy's spies in Kut was executed forthwith. About 250 Arabs and Chaldeans were shot in the *serai* in batches of ten, and a line of corpses soon dangled from gallows on the river-front. The venerable Sheik of Kut was discovered in hiding, dragged through the streets, cruelly flogged, and finally hanged; and the brutal enemy hanged both the Sheik's son and nephew, having first cut off their hands. Thus early did we get an insight into one side of the Turkish character, a side which showed our captors to be but savages with a veneer of civilisation.

Many of the Turkish officers tried to stop their men from looting if their attention was drawn to the matter. In one case the officer merely questioned the offender, and then, drawing his pistol, shot him dead—an example of the disciplinary methods in the Ottoman army on active service. An incident of these turbulent days sticks in my memory. A British N.C.O.

came up to me, smiling broadly, and described how he had met an armed Turk alone in one of our trenches and how the Turk had tried to steal his wrist-watch. "Well, and what did you do?" said I. "Why, sir," he replied, "I just gave the dirty blighter one on the jaw and he didn't want to know no more about the time."

On the day after the surrender we found ourselves bivouacked upstream of Kut in the Shumran bend of the Tigris, which was destined to be the scene of the gallant river-crossing by General Maude's army in 1917. All arrangements in the camp were made by our own staff officers, and the weary and dejected troops took a pride in smartly obeying the orders of their own officers for the last time, and showing the Turkish guards that, though prisoners, their spirit was not broken. All awaited patiently the arrival of the food which the Turks had promised, and at dusk the so-called 'food' was dumped in the dust. Several cartloads of Turkish army biscuits were heaped near a path, and each emaciated prisoner received two. These huge slabs were dark brown in colour, as hard as iron, and full of husks, straw, and earth. But so ravenous were the men that many ate their biscuits at once, and in a couple of hours were writhing in agony on the ground. In the five days that the men remained at Shumran, before they set out on their death-march to Anatolia, more than one hundred died of



enteritis caused by this disgusting food, which was unfit for dogs. These men who died at Shumran had been passed as fit by the Turkish doctors when we surrendered. To get proper food, they began to sell their rags of clothing for a mere song, and thus many of them started on the last journey of their lives destitute even of protection against the cold of the night. It was pitiful. It was damnable. But we could do little to help them, and were soon separated from them and sent ahead, so that we should not see the horrors which were bound to follow from this beginning.

On May 4th a party of 100 British officers and 80 Indian officers, with many orderlies, left Shumran by steamer for Baghdad, after saying good-bye to their men, who crowded the bank alongside. I happened to be one of the party, which included most of the officers of the British units. The ship was packed to the utmost limit, so the voyage was far from comfortable, but it was interesting to see once again the battlefields of Ummal-Tabul and Ctesiphon. Alongside us were barges full of Turkish wounded from downstream, many of whom, though incapable of moving, were practically untended throughout the five days' voyage; and, here and there, bands of Arabs danced alongside the ship, shouting abuse and making signs of the cutting of throats. On arrival in Baghdad we moored opposite the former British Residency—then a German hospital—and the captains,

subalterns, and Indian officers were made to march through the bazaars of the city to be shown off to the populace. No demonstration was made against us, but it was a tiring and humiliating business.

This parading of prisoners is dear to the Turkish heart. For instance, when a party of 20 Yeomanry officers was being escorted through Syria in 1916, a visit was ordered to Beyrout on the sea-coast, though this was off the main line. In Beyrout the prisoners were put into a bandstand in the market-square while the people gazed at them from windows and balconies. In a few minutes a Turkish officer came up and said, "Please walk in couples round and round the bandstand, as the people say they cannot see you properly." The prisoners were disgusted, but protest was useless and they had to comply. This display pleased the Turks so much that they took the British prisoners to the best hotel and primed them with an excellent breakfast and good wine, preparatory to Act II. The curtain rose again on a procession of several miles through the town, after which the prisoners were given tea and despatched by rail once more on their way to Anatolia.

At Baghdad we were shut up in some deserted barracks north of the city, though allowed to go out shopping under escort once during our stay. The American Consul was most kind, and lent us a little gold from his slender stock.

We had been afraid that we should be searched and all our valuables taken, but no search was ever made in the earlier days of our captivity. It would have been possible to secrete small cameras, compasses, and even pistols, which made it the more annoying that these had been thrown into the river when the surrender took place. Anticipating a search at Baghdad, one officer wore his wrist-watch round his ankle under his puttees, and said he would explain the lump as a boil !

Before we left Baghdad, each officer was given one month's pay at Turkish army rates, partly in gold and the remainder in notes. Subadar-majors were in luck, for they got major's pay because they wore crowns on their shoulders ! The gold was simply invaluable. No food was ever issued to officer-prisoners from Mesopotamia, and everything had to be bought. The Arabs in the desert would not accept notes, so without gold many officers would probably have fared badly. At Baghdad the Turks made a list of the officer-prisoners, and this was so amusing an episode that I must describe it. One dialogue ran thus :

" What is your name ? "

" John Smith."

" And your father's name ? "

" John Smith."

" No ! no ! That is *your* name. We want your *father's* name. *Le nom de votre père.* What is it ? "

" John Smith, I tell you."

" Please be calm ! Is your name Smith ? "

" Yes."

" And your father's name is John ? "

" Yes, but that is his Christian name."

" *Très bien !* We understand."

The Turks then entered the officer as "*Smith, the son of John.*"

The conversation proceeded :

" What is your rank ? "

" Captain."

" Your length of service ? "

" Fifteen years."

" Ah ! You are a *capitaine ancien*. A *khalassi*. You wear three stars."

" I am an *officer*. Not a *khalassi*.<sup>1</sup> And do I look ancient ? "

" You are not a *yuzbashi*, therefore you must be a *khalassi*."

" All right. Shove me down as a blooming *khalassi*, or any other Indian menial that you like."

" You are insolent ! A prisoner should be careful. However, let us proceed. What is your native village ? "

" Never lived in a village."

" What ? Don't you know your native village ? The village where you were born ? "

" Oh ! Where I was born ? I was born at sea ; in the Indian Ocean."

<sup>1</sup> A '*khalassi*' in India is a menial. In Turkey he is a senior captain.

The Bimbashi scratched his head and talked rapidly with his clerk. This was a poser, but Constantinople would demand a native village, so the ocean must serve. Captain Smith therefore appeared as "*Khalassi Smith, the son of John. Native village—The Indian Ocean!*"

From Baghdad we went by train to Samarra, eighty miles to the north, then the terminus of the Turkish line. It was an uncomfortable journey in crowded carriages, and at Samarra we waited three days in the railway-station, very short of water, while the Turks tried to collect some donkeys to carry our meagre kit. Next followed a terrible march of some thirty-five miles to Tekrit between 6 p.m. one day and noon the next day. We were dead beat on reaching Tekrit, where we were imprisoned in filthy stables and had to buy our drinking-water when we first arrived. The stable in which I lay, suffering from fever, had only one small hole in the roof for ventilation and was as dark as night, but I thanked God for the protection from the scorching rays of the sun and the ability to stretch my aching limbs on the cool ground.

Day by day we marched, morning and evening, towards Mosul along the right bank of the Tigris, halting one day at Shergat after a détour into the desert. Essad Bey, our swarthy Arab commandant, hailed from Kerkuk and was quite a savage though fairly amiable. He and his gendarmes were terrified lest we should

escape, and guarded us most closely at first; but gradually, in Turkish fashion, precautions were relaxed, and travelling became more comfortable. We had to march on foot most of the way because the Turks provided no animals for the numerous orderlies, and we naturally saw to it that the latter got their turn in riding. The allowance was one small donkey per officer, but half the number of donkeys had to be used for carrying the kit of both officers and orderlies. When it was pointed out to the Turks that nothing had been provided for the orderlies, they expressed the greatest surprise that we could expect any transport for rank and file, and flatly refused to give it. "The common soldiers can walk," said they, "and every officer, if he takes little clothing, can ride all the way." There was always great confusion when the column started at daybreak, for every traveller had to find his donkey, and there were scores of these tiny beasts. Some fellows marked their donkeys with huge initials in indelible pencil, and those who were blessed with white donkeys added artistic decoration in suitable spots to make assurance doubly sure.

A ten days' trek brought us to Mosul, about 170 miles from Samarra by the route chosen by Essad Bey. There we were put into a large barrack outside the town, though allowed to go under escort to a restaurant for meals. The filthy condition of that barrack is quite indescribable. Only those who have been in Mesopo-

tamia or Turkey can adequately picture its state, and the wonder is that we contracted no disease by living there. Enver Pasha, the Turkish Minister of War, came to this barrack on his way back to Stamboul, and made us a long speech in French. He looked like a young Frenchman and had none of the Turkish indolence. He assured us that he had the highest admiration for us, and that it was the misfortune of war that we found ourselves prisoners ; that perhaps another day he might himself be a prisoner ; that it was fate, and that we should not be disheartened but should rest assured that, while in Turkey, we should be treated as the *Precious and Honoured Guests of the Ottoman Government*. Ah ! Enver ! We did not know you then ! The experiences of the march from Samarra had shown that we were precious. But were we honoured ? Was it an honour to be paraded before the Baghdad populace ? Was it an honour to be imprisoned in the disgusting barrack in Mosul ? Yet you spoke convincingly and gave the impression of sincerity. It was not till later that the world knew you for what you were—the unscrupulous liar who sold his country for German gold and fled when that country was ruined. Are you yet alive, or does rumour speak the truth and your body rest in an unknown grave far from the land you betrayed ? You were a brave man till ruin descended on you ; you were ambitious, you were very clever ; but you were responsible

for oceans of blood and seas of misery during your prosperity, and the hands of the martyred rank and file of Kut are raised in vengeance against you.

At Mosul there was a Turkish officers' club on the bank of the Tigris. The Turks had apparently made us honorary members of this club, where coffee and wine could be obtained on payment. It was kind of them, and I was rather curious to see the place. A guard took several of us to the house, and there we entertained a drunken Turkish colonel to more drink, and had a look round. The rooms were furnished in cheap European style and were dirty and stuffy, but the pictures on the walls caught and held the attention. These, without exception, depicted scenes of massacre and bloodshed. They were large oleographs, and every detail of horror was faithfully portrayed. The executioners were generally Turks and the victims Armenians, though sometimes the rôles were reversed. Men were shown mutilated on the ground, women being beaten to death, and babies cut in two with swords. It was a disgusting gallery of savagery and murder, and I was glad to turn away and leave the place.

The route from Mosul lay across a waterless desert towards Nesibin to the west. The country, nevertheless, was not so dreary in appearance as it had been, and the nights were cooler. The Turks provided light four-wheeled carts for the baggage, so the column made

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good progress and the hourly adjustment of donkey-loads was a thing of the past. Flowers grew in places, and, near Nesibin, we came to a rippling stream with rushes on its green banks. Dimly, to the north, towered the mountains of Kurdistan, several of the peaks crowned with the battlements of old fortresses. The gradual change from the trackless wastes of Mesopotamia to the fertile littoral of the Mediterranean was delightful to see, and, despite the uncertainty of the future, our spirits rose and our steps quickened. A day's halt at the pretty little village of Nesibin, and we were off once again for Raas-el-Ain, then the terminus of the railway-line from Aleppo. There were many deserted villages on the line of march. These aroused our curiosity and we asked for an explanation. The Turks admitted that they were Armenian villages, but said that the inhabitants had deserted them because the water-supply had failed, or that they could not understand where the people had gone or why they had gone. The streams from the mountains gave the lie to their explanation of a scarcity of water, and very soon we discovered the true state of affairs. A well near the line of march was full of the remains of murdered Armenians, foully done to death not many months before we passed that way. Hence the deserted villages, hence the cringing demeanour of the few Armenians on the road, and hence the contempt of the civilised world which such barbarity has earned.

The column started one morning expecting the usual twelve-mile march, Essad Bey leading the way on his Arab pony and deep in an attempt at conversation with some officers. His knowledge of French was confined to the remark "*Il-y-a*," but Arabic, aided by signs, helped things along. They were discussing fishing when they passed a small stream only four miles from the start. An idea struck Essad Bey. He pointed to the stream, ejaculated "*Il-y-a*," dismounted, and ordered the column to halt and camp. Remonstrance was useless. Wearily every man unloaded his cart, unstrapped his valise, and sat down to watch Essad try his luck in a stream which could hold nothing larger than a minnow. It meant another day in the desert before reaching Raas-el-Ain, but what is time to the Turkish mind?

At last, on June 8th, we marched into Raas-el-Ain, and thus completed a journey of nearly 400 miles from Samarra. The village was merely a collection of mud huts, with a few jerry-built houses dotted among them, but the railway pointed to comparative civilisation, and, however uncomfortable the wagons, they would carry us to a better land. There were several German soldiers in Raas-el-Ain, and some could speak English. One of them told me that the entire British fleet had been recently destroyed at the Battle of Jutland, and that Earl Kitchener had been drowned at sea. I laughed, and told him to tell it to the Horse Marines or whatever

their equivalent happened to be in the Fatherland. The Hun was annoyed and took himself off, but his news weighed on my mind, for I knew that the Germans were too clever to issue absolutely false reports if these could be easily checked. Palpably the entire fleet could not have been destroyed, yet the enemy must have some facts on which to found their claim to victory. And how could Earl Kitchener have been drowned at sea? Surely not in the English Channel when carefully escorted? It could not be true; yet, if untrue, why lie to helpless prisoners who could not pass that lie on to those whose discouragement might affect the war? Surely no one lives in a denser fog than he whose mind is fed upon lies and who has no means of ascertaining the truth. In time a prisoner begins to doubt *everything* that is told him. He lives on rumours, and generally on rumours that are false. His friends exaggerate good news, his enemies exaggerate bad news. He becomes a sceptic of sceptics, and doubts even his eyesight.

We travelled to Aleppo in a long train of dirty goods-wagons. The train stopped at every station throughout the night, and its speed rarely exceeded fifteen miles an hour; but it was indeed a train, and that sufficed. I took the opportunity to turn out my valise and count my worldly goods. Besides the ragged khaki drill uniform on my back, there was one spare khaki tunic and one pair of slacks (both very old), one old shirt, an odd boot—too precious

to be thrown away—a pair of socks, a vest with many holes, a crumpled mass of paper forming a diary of the siege of Kut, a towel, washing and shaving tackle, a tiny pillow, an ancient blanket and rug, and a miscellaneous jumble of twigs, cord, matches, and empty tins which was popularly known as ‘Kag.’ I surveyed these possessions, worth perhaps three pounds sterling, with some satisfaction, for others were not so well off and I was the lucky owner of a change of clothing. When travelling you know not whither, at the beck and call of an enemy who doesn’t know his own mind for two minutes together and changes it at once when he recognises it, it is greatly to your advantage to be able to pack all your belongings in the space of those two minutes, for you will probably have to unpack in the next two.

During the night the train crossed the Euphrates, and in the early morning reached Muslumiah Junction, whence a line led away to the Anti-Taurus Range. Not long afterwards we steamed into the large station at Aleppo, the first civilised city we had seen for years. The cobbled streets had pavements, there were houses with tiled roofs, a market-square, shops with plate-glass windows, advertisements in French, women walking unveiled in the streets, men in straw hats and floppy European clothes; the place looked more European than Eastern, or at least so it seemed to our eyes, surfeited as we were with the so-called glamour of the East.

## CHAPTER II

### TURKS, GERMANS, AND BRITISH PRISONERS

Great fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em,  
And little fleas have lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*.

“ *And so ad infinitum.* ”

I pondered the phrase as I moved well clear of the low sleeping-shelf which followed the walls of the whitewashed barrack-room. It was well said! One could almost believe that the author had penned those lines in Turkey. If he did not, thought I, he showed a wonderful insight into a most striking feature of that land. I stood, with many others, in the room in the Aleppo barrack, and marvelled at the multiplicity of insect life which swarmed from every crack where, a few minutes before, nothing was to be seen. Bugs, fleas, lice, they fought each other for the honour of our first acquaintance. They crawled, they ran, they leapt. Never was there a warmer welcome extended to strangers from a distant land, and never were such advances so coyly and coldly received. I watched the man next to me, and he watched me. I beat off the assailants from him, and he then performed a like kind office for me. Observation and co-operation served to prevent much

damage, but they could not be relaxed for an instant. This was the place set apart by the Turks to accommodate the captains, subalterns, and Indian officers from Kut during their stay in Aleppo.

Every house in Turkey seems to be built of bricks and bugs, held together by a rickety framework of wood. It is an unsavoury subject, yet one cannot avoid its contemplation, for it is important in its bearing on the health of the people. Turkey is ravaged in winter by typhus, and that fell disease is propagated by the bite of a particular bug which thrives in cold weather. It is most dangerous to sleep indoors in Anatolia between October and April, unless you know the house and have your own bedding and a plentiful supply of insect powder. In the officers' camps in Turkey there were very few cases of typhus. But this was due to the fact that only the cleanest of the available empty houses were selected for occupation, and unceasing war was waged against the insect hordes. May the name of Keating be for ever blessed! His powder made life bearable if not enjoyable. But even that powerful deterrent was scorned by some of the aristocracy of the *pulex* tribe. I once bought half a dozen planks, and, with a few tools and much hard labour, made myself a bed. The planks were clean, the room in which I installed the bed was swept daily, and my bedding was well aired and liberally 'Keatinged.' On the third night in that new bed I was bitten

to pieces. I moved my bed further from the wall, put the bedding all day in the sun, made a paste of insect powder and smeared the bed liberally with it, and hoped that the enemy had been defeated. Not a bit of it! Two nights later the foe assaulted with renewed vigour. I repeated the process, bought four saucers, filled them with creosote, placed a saucer under each leg of the bed, and turned in with a happy mind. The truce lasted just forty-eight hours, and again the bugs mocked my efforts and took their revenge. Where *could* the brutes come from? Lying and puzzling over this matter one night after lights were out, I felt something hit me on the face, and then at last I knew. *They fell from the ceiling.* A kind orderly, experienced in these matters, then suggested the boiling-water treatment, renewed at suitable intervals, and at last it was possible to sleep in peace. Every Monday I carried my bed into the road, got a large kettle of boiling water, poured the liquid into every crack, and gloated over the slaughter of the innocents which followed. A new generation started the next day, but they were mere infants and met their doom on the following Monday before they really knew their business. Most men found that a liberal supply of boiling water was the only thing which could ensure victory in the unending struggle. The Turks themselves, born and bred in the midst of these pests, hardly give them a thought. They are accepted

as a part of the daily life, and possibly the insects do not attack Turks as they do Europeans.

We British accept as an axiom that cleanliness is next to godliness. We have learnt it in our infancy, we have been trained to it in our schools, and we carry it with us to the grave. But do we ever consider that cleanliness is largely a matter of opportunity and climate? In England we have every facility for bathing. Even in the humblest cottage in winter there is usually fuel for heating water, and the climate is not so cold that our ablutions become a trial or even a danger. But in the interior of Turkey the bitter cold of winter is not conducive to cleanliness. Fuel is scarce and very expensive, and the Turkish peasant finds that a daily, or even weekly, hot bath is quite beyond his means, so he resigns himself to a state of grime till the pleasant days of summer return, when he may, or may not, remember the joys of the bath. But the more educated Turk has facilities for bathing in the Turkish bath, or *hamam*, as it is called, which is found in every town.

I remember a notice which was posted on the board in the camp for officer-prisoners of war at Afium Karahissar. It was signed by the Turkish commandant, and ran as follows :

*"Officers will be permitted to visit the Hamam once a week. In the interest of cleanliness it is advisable that they should wash themselves."*

This notice caused great merriment in the



camp. Some people were annoyed, and maintained that it was a reflection on their personal appearance, but to the majority it was an amusing example of Turkish ideas. When it appeared, I happened to be hard at work building a matting enclosure on the landing of our house, where we could have our morning baths in privacy, even though the place was horribly draughty. But the notice encouraged me to sample the attractions of a genuine Turkish bath, though the snow lay thick on the ground ; so I put the equivalent of tenpence in my pocket (the cost of a bath) and repaired to the hamam with nine others, escorted by a Turkish sailor.

The Hamam was a massive building, heated by a subterranean furnace into which all the combustible rubbish of the town was emptied, so that the temperature was always high. The thick walls and domed roof were not pierced for ventilation, and the atmosphere within was incredibly oppressive. Light filtered through the glass coverings of a few small holes in the ceiling of each room, and it took some time for the eyes to become accustomed to the gloom of the vaulted chambers. In the entrance-porch was the office, where we paid our tenpences and received in exchange a couple of towels and a pair of wooden clogs apiece, and we then entered a dingy room warmed by a charcoal brazier and furnished with seats round the walls. There we undressed, wrapped our towels round us, and clattered in our awkward clogs down

some steps on to the stone floor of the first vaulted chamber. Thence a smelly tunnel led to the second and fully heated chamber, where we were to bathe. There were niches around the walls of this room, and in each was a tap for water and a few small metal bowls, so we doffed our towels, soaped ourselves from head to foot, and splashed merrily in water drawn from the taps and collected in the bowls. Some of the taps gave cold water, some gave tepid,\* and a few gave boiling hot water if the *hamam-ji* in charge had kept his furnace going at full strength. Half an hour in that oven made one gasp. The perspiration streamed off one's body in the intervals of sousing it with hot water, and personally I was not sorry to wander back to the changing-room to get a few breaths of air, even though it was tainted with the fumes of burning charcoal.

That is the genuine Turkish bath of Anatolia, and it will be seen that it differs greatly from the luxurious variety obtainable in London. If the Turk goes to the hamam once a week or once a fortnight, he is considered to be well cleansed, and before he goes he is shaved by a barber. He does not shave himself; that would not be playing the game by the worthy clan of barbers. In this matter of shaving, the custom of the country differs from our own. A Turk in his best clothes is quite smart even if he has a six days' growth of stubble on his chin. Our demands for razors were always a matter of

surprise to the Ottoman officials, who wondered at such misplaced zeal.

But let me revert to our adventures in Aleppo. I and about one hundred other British and Indian officer-prisoners were thrust into the disgusting barrack-room and told that we should live there together till we left the city. Now, in spite of the cordial relations existing between British and Indian officers, their customs differ largely. Both British and Indians would prefer to live apart with their countrymen, and besides there is the fact that Indian officers, not holding King's commissions, are subordinate to all British officers. The Ottoman officials never seemed able to understand the position of such officers. They pointed to the stars on a subadar's shoulders and insisted that he must be a *yuzbashi* (captain). We explained that this was not so, but that he was called a 'Subadar.' "But does not a subadar command one hundred men?" said they. "True," we replied; "but his education, training, and responsibilities are quite different from those of a British officer, and he is subordinate to the latter." "Among the officers in the Ottoman army," remarked the Turks, "there are Turks from Stamboul, Arabs from Mesopotamia, and divers others, all commissioned, and all equal.<sup>1</sup> We understand. The fact is that you do not *like* the Indians. Is it not so?" This remark made us absolutely furious. It was so unjustified, so untrue. We

<sup>1</sup> This was not true.

numbered some of our best friends among our Indian comrades-in-arms and were proud of the fact. Many and many a time had we shared the same hardships, the same dangers, and the same joys. If some of their customs and prejudices differed from ours, what matter? Each recognised and approved the fact. We were all soldiers, fighting for the same cause. The enemy seemed to have a purpose behind his remarks and actions in this matter. That purpose was to estrange the nationalities and to sow dissension. The loyalty of the Indian officers doomed his efforts to complete and utter failure. The Indians spotted his game and despised him the more.

British and Indians alike refused to remain even an hour in the bug-infested barrack-room. The Turks shouted "*Yussak*" (forbidden) as we trooped out into the verandah, but we took no notice of their protests and demanded an interview with the Governor of Aleppo, who was expected shortly at the barracks. This frightened the commandant of the barracks, who then agreed to interview a deputation. Beard a Turk in his den, and the battle is generally won! The commandant was all regrets and apologies. "The greatest care had been taken to select a suitable room. Hours had been spent in preparing it for our reception. He was desolated to think that there could have been any vermin in it. Where was that villain of a *chaoush* (sergeant), that son of a

dog, who had dared to allow a single flea to hide in the planking? Let him be hung, drawn, and quartered," etc. etc., for several minutes. Yet that commandant would never have given a thought to us or the barrack-room unless we had made a fuss; and, more particularly, unless the Governor of Aleppo had been about to visit the place. 'Inspection fever' may be common in many countries, but in Turkey it transcends all else, for in that land the dread of the superior is a positive nightmare, and the said superior is ruthless in his dealings if there is the slightest chance of an adverse report to Stamboul. We soon found that everything must be carried with a high hand. Humble acceptance of fate was worse than useless. A careless, cheerful, polite, yet superior manner, backed up by veiled allusions to influence in high places and veiled threats for the future, would work almost any oracle.

Following close on the interview with the commandant came an order for all British officers to go to hotels in the town, and we marched off in parties of ten to find suitable accommodation, each party escorted by a guard. The Indian officers were given some comparatively clean rooms in the barracks where they could live free of charge. A long walk brought some of us to the Hotel Abdullah, which was managed apparently by an Armenian family. The door opened slowly and a sullen young man confronted us. He was addressed volubly by

the Turkish guard, who demanded our admittance ; but the proprietor, as the young man turned out to be, protested that he did not want us. This he did in Turkish, but it was easy to see the drift of his remarks. However, the Turks prevailed, and in we went, while a small boy and two draggled women eyed us curiously from the murky shadows within. Arrived upstairs, we sat down while final instructions were given to a sentry posted at the head of the stairs, and then we set about getting sleeping-accommodation. The room which I was to share with two others was already occupied by three Armenians indulging in a midday siesta. These, in pyjamas, were evicted to make room for us, and seemingly did not dare to protest. The Turks had given their orders and that settled the matter. The room was far from clean, the sheets were not changed, but oh ! the luxury of a rest that afternoon on a real bed with a spring mattress ! After the stony ground of the desert and the rattling floor of a railway-wagon, it was heavenly to lie on a bed of any sort, and these were well sprung.

Rooms having been allotted, the pangs of hunger sent us back to the dining-room, where the proprietor sat sullenly in a corner.

" What can we have for breakfast ? " we asked in English.

No answer.

" Can we have *déjeuner*, please ? " said our French expert in his best style.

Again no answer.

"We want something to eat," ventured one Briton in halting German.

Not a word in reply.

"Try the blighter in Arabic, someone," said our leader.

But the proprietor seemed more wooden than ever and quite impervious to the language of the nomads. Even Hindustani made no impression, and in desperation we resorted to the one universal language—the language of signs. That seemed to rouse him, and he got up and ordered the shapeless women to bring something. Then, though late in the day, we remembered the golden key that opens all doors in the East and showed the man some money. At once everything was altered. A table was laid for breakfast, the women bustled about, even the surly Armenian himself thawed to some extent, and a meal of a sort appeared from the kitchen. While we ate, the Armenian sat in the deep shadow of his corner and observed us in silence, estimating how much he could get out of us. But when the breakfast bill had been paid he developed a sudden gift of tongues. He could speak French fluently, Arabic a little; he understood some English, and had a nodding acquaintance with German. Yet this was the same mute from whom not a word could be extracted, when we arrived, in any language we knew! I think that he imagined that, being prisoners, we could not possibly have any money, and that he would

have to feed us free of charge and trust to luck to get what he could from the Turks ; and he was most agreeably surprised to find that he would be paid. He was forced to take us in, and was determined to get rid of us as soon as he could, until the sight of a few dirty notes changed his mind. The power of money may be great in civilised Europe and almighty in busy America, but in the Ottoman domains it can do almost anything and often balances the scales between life and death.

The following day all British officers were allowed to go into the city under escort to do some shopping, and full advantage was taken of the concession. Aleppo gave the general impression of a small European town. Its streets were cobbled, its shops had many French and German articles, and there were not so many Arabs in the main streets as to detract appreciably from its Western look. All eyes were turned curiously on the English prisoners, some with a gleam of triumph or mockery, others with sympathy. Several men hung about in the offing, and it was easy to see that they would like to talk to us, yet feared to come near. Greeks and Armenians vie with each other in hatred of the Turk, and well the latter knows it. The city was full of spies, official, or merely out for blackmail. It was dangerous to approach a prisoner in public, even if one was a neutral. The difficulty lay in distinguishing friend from foe. In the shelter of a shop a man might



whisper to one that he was friendly to the British and would like to help them. He would ask for news of the Mesopotamian front, saying that he was a Greek, Armenian, or some other people hostile to the Turks. But *was* he a friend, or merely a Turkish spy? Refreshments were sometimes offered to loosen a prisoner's tongue, but I imagine that any spies who entertained us got little for their money. To all questions of fact it was best to profess a blank ignorance, but it was more amusing to give judicious rein to the imagination and tell a credible but incorrect tale. If the man was really well disposed, he would probably soon forget your words and merely remember with satisfaction that he had done a kindness to one in adversity. If he was an enemy, so much the better; he had wasted his money and would carry false information to his superiors.

But there were in Aleppo a great many genuine friends of the British among the Swiss colony. Three officers were walking along a street, on the look-out for a restaurant, when a man standing outside a small shop asked if they were British and whether they spoke French. Being assured on both points, he insisted that they must come in and have a drink. So in they went, expecting, perhaps a bottle of inferior *vin ordinaire* or a measure of the universal Turkish intoxicant known as *raki* or *mastic*—a colourless liquid with a taste like alcoholic Odol. Not a bit of it! They sat down before

a magnum of Guinness's stout, a luxury far beyond their wildest dreams, and two other bottles followed the first. Their genial host announced himself as Swiss, and would not hear of any payment. He discussed current topics and described the city of Aleppo ; but when questioned about the Armenians, he glanced right and left and sank his voice to a whisper. On the subject of the Armenian massacres he refused to say a word, even in his own house, and he warned the prisoners that spies were everywhere and any mention of the Turkish atrocities was foolhardy.

There was an idea which was very prevalent in England at this time, namely, that 'the Turk was a gentleman.' This opinion often appeared in letters from England, coupled with congratulations that we should be resting in such gentlemanly hands ! To correct that impression would have done no good, and indeed any letter denying the fact would never have got beyond Turkey, so it was allowed to stand. The phrase, nevertheless, caused us some amusement as well as surprise. The Americans in Turkey could have expressed an opinion on the point. A perusal of the book written by Mr. Morgenthau, the U.S. Ambassador at Constantinople, will show the mass of prevarication and obstruction with which he had to contend in his dealings with the Turks. Away from the critical eyes of the Americans, the Turks could go their own way, and they were careful to throw every obstacle

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in the path of a neutral who wanted to tour the country to see what was really happening. A neutral had to be exceedingly careful in his dealings. The Americans were known to be possible enemies of the future, and so they were given doubled attention by the Turks and were constantly followed by spies. The Turks, of course, were all promises and assurances. They blustered, they flattered, they smiled and shrugged their shoulders. Everything would be all right to-morrow. To-morrow came and nothing had been done. Day followed day, and each day brought a new tale, yet no progress was made, and British soldiers were dying in scores in the wilds of Anatolia. It is a wonder that the neutrals could keep gallantly at their work and continue the unequal struggle as they did.

We spent one Sunday in Aleppo, and thus had an opportunity of seeing the *élite* of the city in their best attire. On Sunday afternoon the fat old Syrian merchant hires an araba (carriage), drawn by a couple of wretched ponies with every rib showing, and sallies forth in *tarboosh*, frock-coat, doubtful linen, and light brown boots to take his carriage exercise. Beside him is his spouse, a shapeless and voluminous lady whose charms are carefully hidden in oceans of sombre drapery lest the bold eye of the stranger should view them to his undoing. Perched on the small seat opposite this couple are a flapper and a small boy. The latter is in his best suit and

has obviously been warned that the slightest movement on his part will spoil his clothes and bring the maternal wrath upon him. His sallow little face looks dully out upon the antics of the urchins in the gutter, at once patronising and envious. His black hair has been oiled till it shines like polished ebony. His blue velvet suit is surmounted by an imitation-lace collar, and a few inches of dirty white sock show above his buttoned boots. He is not an enticing child, and our eyes wander to the specimen of budding womanhood by his side. She is slim and graceful, and as yet shows no signs of following in the footsteps of her mother towards the land of avoirdupois, though doubtless she will reach that land in a very few years. Her dress would have been fashionable ten years earlier, but it looks odd in the year 1916, and its glaring colours arrest the eye. The most patent of patent-leather shoes squeeze her feet, and above them show a gossamer pair of silk stockings, though, alas! those stockings hang in untidy folds, deprived apparently of their sole means of support. No veil covers the damsel's face, but it is almost hidden instead in a mask of paint and powder. From this mask look a pair of bright and enquiring eyes, anon darting a swift glance at the fat couple opposite, and then, if their attention seems otherwise occupied, a still swifter glance upwards to our verandah. A child in years, yet how soon to pass from childhood to that drab existence of the Eastern matron

typified in the unsightly figure of her mother. The carriage rattles slowly over the cobbles, and a young man on the pavement greets the old Syrian, who acknowledges his acquaintance with a grave salute. The women make no sign, nor does the young man bestow a glance on them. But even if an Oriental by birth, he is determined not to betray it in his dress. His lounge suit has the most heavily padded shoulders which his tailor can contrive, and his baggy trousers flap airily in the breeze. On his head is a straw hat with a wide brim and a yellow ribbon, and his lemon-yellow shoes, with bulbous toes, draw attention to his bright blue socks. An amusing figure as he swaggers along the crowded street in full assurance that he represents the height of fashion—as perhaps he actually does in Aleppo.

We stayed only a few days in Aleppo and then started for Islahie in the Anti-Taurus Range. The city looked quite picturesque in the morning sunshine as the train steamed out of the station. It was a bright day, and we all felt cheerful and optimistic. The train wound its way between stony hills, and soon the commanding citadel of Aleppo was lost to view and cultivation appeared on all sides. Along the country roads meandered the little bullock-carts of the peasants, creaking and swaying in an alarming manner on their solid wooden wheels, while alongside each strolled the driver in his baggy trousers stuffed with small purchases from the market.

Here and there the figure of a woman sat huddled on the sacks in the cart, and children played about the road or shrilly urged the patient cattle to further efforts. A rustic and peaceful scene, far removed from the horrors and tragedies of war. The railway-carriages were comfortable, though not too clean, and the train made good progress in spite of the lack of coal for fuel. Gradually the undulating ground was replaced by mountains and crags overlooking dark gorges in which torrents of muddy water foamed and dashed. Short tunnels became frequent, and steep inclines tested the struggling locomotive to its limit ; but at length the train drew up quietly in the little station at Islahie, where the mountains towered on all sides. This was the limit of railway travel in 1916, for the tunnel through the mountains, to connect with the line from Adana, was still under construction. We collected our meagre belongings and moved to a camping-ground near the station where a few Arab tents had been pitched. The journey over the Anti-Taurus Mountains had to be made by road, and transport was not available, so we settled down to await the pleasure of the Turks.

Djemal Pasha, the Turkish commander in Syria, was at this time massing his troops for a renewed attack on the Suez Canal, an attack which failed in August 1916, far from its objective. German reinforcements and troops from Austria were also being collected hurriedly in

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Syria, and ample evidence of these activities was visible in Islahie. Along the road leading from Mamourie across the mountains came ponderous howitzers, each on a travelling-carriage drawn by a team of labouring oxen, and all destined for the attack which was to drive the English into the Suez Canal and cut Britain's main artery to the East. This attack was to put the finishing touch to the enemy's successes in the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia, and it was confidently expected that England would then pray for mercy—at least, that was the tale which the cunning Germans told the credulous Turks to put new life into their weary troops. Many camps could be seen in sheltered spots, and from some of these came young German and Austrian staff officers, intent on seeing the survivors of the Kut garrison and picking up what news they could on Mesopotamian matters. A group assembled just outside the ring of Arab sentries which encircled our camp. The officers were smartly dressed and were mostly young Germans of a good type. I think that Germany was careful in the selection of her officers who were destined to control the vagaries of the Turks, for theirs was no easy job. They had to contend with corruption in high places, indolence and veiled hostility in the lower ranks, and immense difficulties of transport. The young Germans at Islahie hailed us in good English and seemed to want to be friendly; but the Arab sentries would



have none of it and ordered them away. One of our fellows was wearing a cap of a rather Hunnish shape and was talking in German, so he was seen off the premises in company with the Germans, greatly to our amusement. The Arabs could never distinguish an Englishman from a German, and that fact was of much value to men trying to escape. The Turkish peasant was no better in this respect, as may be remembered by those who have read that thrilling tale of adventure entitled *450 Miles to Freedom*.

A few remarks on the conduct of the Germans in Turkey during the war may not be amiss. It has been said that much of the brutality to which so many British prisoners succumbed was directly instigated by the Germans at Constantinople. I do not know on what evidence this statement is based, and it seems doubtful if it is quite correct. It is conceivable that the Germans at the Turkish headquarters wished to produce a political effect adverse to the Entente by the display in Central Anatolia of British captives in the depths of misery and starvation, though it is difficult to realise so inhuman a motive ; but I find it impossible to believe that they actually *asked* the Turks to torture and kill their prisoners so long after the surrender. Dark tales are afloat of German orders for the massacre of prisoners in the Dardanelles immediately after capture. They may be true. But murder when the blood is still heated is different from the slow martyrdom



of months and years. Rather would I believe that the Germans at Stamboul deliberately shut their eyes to what they knew full well would be the fate of the remnants of the Kut garrison in Turkish hands in the mountains of the interior, realising that it was unnecessary for them to lift a finger to secure the political effect they desired since the savagery of the Turks would ensure it. Enver Pasha, the actual dictator of Turkey, was completely dominated by the Germans in 1918 ; but in 1916 he was in some respects a free agent. As leader of the iniquitous 'Committee of Union and Progress' he then played into German hands only to the extent of lining his pocket liberally with German gold and accepting the help and advice of the Germans in military matters. The Turkish national debt to Germany did not then amount to 500 millions sterling, as it did towards the end of the war. In 1916 the country was ruled by Enver Pasha and his Young Turks, and on them should rest the responsibility of the atrocities of interior Anatolia.

I hold no brief for the Germans in Turkey, or for Germans anywhere. Many of those in Turkey were brutal Prussians of the class so common on the Western front, and many others adopted a policy of *laissez-faire* where the Turks were concerned, either from diffidence in interfering in Turkish administration, or from a disinclination to add to their existing difficulties, which were considerable. But, in common justice, I wish to record a few instances of

humanity shown by German officers in Turkey towards those in distress. In the desert between Nesibin and Raas-el-Ain two emaciated British soldiers lay beside a pool of stagnant water, both dying of dysentery. The column of prisoners to which they belonged had long since disappeared in the haze on the horizon, but they had managed to crawl thus far, where they could at least escape the torments of thirst. For hours they lay beside the pool. The sun beat down upon them, scorching the last remnants of vitality out of their fever-stricken bodies. Then the night came on, and with the rising moon the damp cold ate into their bones. Yet still they lay as they had fallen, their bleeding feet wrapped in puttees, their thin bodies almost naked, their small store of food exhausted. A German officer with a caravan of Turks happened to pass that way, and found that there was still life in them. He ordered the caravan to halt and take them along with it. The Turk in charge protested vociferously. Obviously the Englishmen were dying, so why trouble about them? If they were put in a cart, he would have to jettison some merchandise on which he hoped to make a good profit in Aleppo. It was impossible! The demand was outrageous! . . . But the will of the German prevailed. He threatened to report to Headquarters, he gave the prisoners food and drink, he gave them what medicine he could from his own store, and he saw that they were laid in a

cart and accompanied the caravan. They died within a few days and their tale reached me through other men. But was not that German a man who did credit to his country? An exception, you say? Perhaps so. Yet the tale is worth recording.

On a winding road high up in the Anti-Taurus Mountains a senior British officer came upon three British prisoners from Kut, all incapacitated by dysentery and abandoned by the Turks. They lay by the roadside, ragged and without food or drink. The officer, himself a prisoner, managed to get them into his carts and brought them to the nearest hospital. But, mark you, those three soldiers had only survived till their rescue because a German officer of a passing wireless section had given them almost his entire personal stock of tinned food, though unable to bring them along. The same British officer, on his arrival at Mamourie, wished to hand over thirty sick men whom he had found at various places. The Turkish doctors inspected them and acknowledged that they were all cases for hospital, but they refused absolutely to admit them. Seeing that the men were in a very bad way, a German doctor then came forward and said that, though he had no authority to admit them, he would take the responsibility and send them to a German hospital in the mountains, where they would be well cared for. He also gave each man some bread and a cup of good coffee.

It is a curious fact that the enmity of war seems to leave a more lasting impression on women than on men. The least permanent is the enmity between the men actually in the firing line, who cannot but be impressed from time to time with the gallantry and endurance of the foe opposite them. I remember a British doctor once relating how he was working with German doctors in a German hospital camp in Turkey and was accosted by a German nurse.

"So you are a British doctor, are you not?" said she.

"Yes," he replied.

"*Then I am going to make you as uncomfortable as I possibly can,*" was her sweet rejoinder.

"Thanks," he answered, with a smile.

After the armistice in 1918 I was climbing a steep path leading up to an old fortress which overlooks Afium Karahissar, and found my progress blocked by a party of Germans bent on sightseeing on their way out of Turkey. There were half a dozen officers and a couple of nurses. I had to pass them, and the path was very narrow, but I put a bold face on it, saluted, and wished them "Good evening." The officers without exception returned my salute and greeting with the greatest politeness. But the nurses! If looks could have killed, I should have been a dead man that minute; and, having looked, they deliberately turned their backs. And yet, who knows? Perhaps those very nurses had lost their nearest and

dearest by British hands, and they naturally hated the sight of an Englishman. I bow humbly to the loyalty of womanhood.

It may not be generally known that the Turks captured altogether 16,583 British and Indian soldiers during the war. Of these, 3,290 are known to have died, and 1,506 escaped. At the end of the war there were 7,414 British and Indian prisoners alive in Turkey. *What, then, happened to the remaining 4,373 prisoners?* The Turks admitted the capture of 16,583 prisoners. They admitted the number of deaths and escapes which I have quoted. *No trace has ever been found of the missing 4,373.* But perhaps the stories told by survivors may account for some of them. Their experiences are terrible and ghastly, and I do not wish to dwell unduly upon them. Such tales of cruelty and suffering cause the blood to boil, and stir up once again the hatred which accompanies the grim spectre of War. Yet some of these sad tales bring out so clearly the true character of the Turks and their Arab myrmidons that it may be well to relate them; and others, though they wring the heart, make one proud to belong to the British Empire which can produce men of such indomitable spirit and endurance. Of those who escaped, almost all were Indians who managed to evade the vigilance of the guards while still in Mesopotamia. Their nationality lent itself easily to disguise in a land of Arabs, and they were not so closely guarded as the



BRITISH OFFICERS AT YOZGAD.



ANATOLIAN TURKS.



British. All honour, nevertheless, to those bold spirits who won through to freedom.

A British private from Kut told the following story: "The first column of 3,000 men marched from Samarra on May 22nd. No transport was provided except a few camels and donkeys for the sick, and the escort frequently used these animals, so that the sick men had to walk or die. The escort stole boots and clothing from us, and many men had to march with only strips of blanket bound round their feet. The usual ration given to us was two handfuls of *atta* (coarse flour), a handful of wheat, a spoonful of *ghee* (clarified butter), and some salt. This had to last a man for two or even three days. At Samarra a so-called 'meat ration' was issued. The ration was one goat among 400 men. Sometimes mouldy chupatties were given us instead of *atta*, but no fuel was ever supplied for cooking our food." Another man said: "About two days before we reached Raas-el-Ain I saw the escort burying a British soldier. He was foaming at the mouth and moving feebly. I, and several others, went to help him, but were driven off with rifles. *The man was buried alive before our eyes.*"

Can anything more ghastly be imagined? Admitting that the murderers were savage Arabs who have no regard whatever for human life or suffering, what can be said of the officers of the Ottoman Empire, whether Arab or Turkish, who permitted this outrage? The column had



been halted to bury the dead. Rather than halt again in a short time, the burial of a living man was condoned. But let us pass on.

At Nesibin a number of invalid British soldiers were collected and put into a Turkish hospital. A survivor thus described their treatment: "I went into hospital at Nesibin with 100 others and was there from June 14th to June 27th, 1916. While waiting to be admitted, several men, who were too weak to stand, were knocked about by a Turkish *chaoush* [sergeant]. For the first four days after admission we got no medical treatment whatever, but some Germans then intervened and we were medically treated. Water was issued to us in the morning and evening only, and we had nothing to keep it in. Once during this fortnight I managed to walk to a stream to wash, but those too weak to walk could never wash. Helpless dysentery cases were neither washed nor tended in any way. As rations we were given in the early morning a teacupful of cooked wheat and rice and a tiny morsel of meat. As far as I know, I am the sole survivor of the hundred men who went into hospital with me at Nesibin."

On the journey by rail from Raas-el-Ain to the Anti-Taurus Mountains, fifty-two prisoners were crowded into one closed wagon and the doors were locked. This was in the evening, and the doors were not unlocked till the train reached Islahie the next morning. There was no room to lie down, so the men had to sit on top of

each other or stand all night. Most of them were dysentery cases, and, when the doors were unlocked at last, several were taken out dead.

When the rank-and-file prisoners from Kut reached Anatolia, none were in a fit state to work. They should have been kept for at least three months in a hospital camp on special diet. Instead they were put to work immediately on railway construction in unhealthy valleys in the Taurus or Anti-Taurus Mountains. A man who was in a working camp at Bagtsche in the Anti-Taurus Range thus described what happened when his party reached that place: "We were at Bagtsche nine weeks. No rations were provided at first for sick men, who consequently had to be fed by those capable of working, till, nearly 80 per cent. being sick, a small invalid ration had to be given. At one time no doctor came to the camp to see the sick for five days, so, on the fifth day, I and some others took two dying men to hospital. The doctor refused to see or admit them, and they both died outside. On arrival at Bagtsche my party numbered seventy-two, but we left the place only thirty-three strong, the remainder having died in the nine weeks."

It is useless to comment on this evidence, which is corroborated in most cases by several witnesses. I could give far more evidence of a similar nature. The English language does not contain words strong enough adequately to express the loathing and contempt which such

tales inspire ; but I think that enough has been written to show clearly the inhuman brutality of which the Turks are capable when untrammelled by the presence of Europeans. One can only hope that those responsible for these horrors have met their just reward in this world or the next.

Towards the end of the war the treatment of our soldiers in Turkey was much better, owing, firstly, to the good offices of the Dutch Embassy at Constantinople, and, secondly, to grave misgivings in the Turkish mind as to the result of the war. The Turks began to doubt if the Germans would win, so they tried to curry favour with their prisoners. They had always hated the Germans, but in 1918 they spat on the ground when they mentioned them. The arrogance of the German, his supercilious manner, and his thinly veiled contempt for the Turk, fanned to a white heat a smouldering flame of hatred in the breast of the latter, and it was with difficulty that many Germans came alive out of Turkey after the armistice. The Turks never ceased to assure their British prisoners that the Huns were '*choke fennah*' (very bad) and the British '*choke ayee*' (very good), and this opinion was volunteered when there was nothing to be gained by it. But the remark came chiefly from Turks of the humbler class. The officers dared not express their sentiments so openly. There seems to be something in the British character which appeals to the Turk with

particular force. Perhaps it is the Briton's fondness for a joke, perhaps it is his light-hearted acceptance of adversity, or it may be that he is ready to recognise the better points in all men and to show that he appreciates those points. Whatever it may be, it is undoubtedly powerful, and it contributed to the better treatment of our rank and file in the later stages of their captivity. The German character, as displayed in her soldiers, seems to be singularly lacking in the saving grace of *humour*—that attribute that turns away more wrath than any soft answer. The mailed fist and the iron heel do not encourage it. It is a tender plant, and it withers in the proximity of a War Lord. No one noticed its absence more than the Turk. He missed it in the German, but he found it in the Briton.

## CHAPTER III

### THROUGH ANATOLIA TO YOZGAD

I travelled among unknown men  
In lands beyond the sea,  
Nor, England ! did I know till then  
What love I bore to thee.

WORDSWORTH.

AROUND the prisoners' camp at Islahie in the Anti-Taurus Mountains wandered a gaunt figure, clothed in blue cotton and wearing a battered khaki helmet. Anon it sank down, then rose again and tottered forward a few steps in the bright morning light. It came close to the tents and collapsed once more. The helmet rolled in the dust, and we saw the emaciated features of a British soldier ! Whence had come this lonely atom of the wreckage of War ? Could that skeleton really be all that remained of a stalwart son of Britain when Turkey had done her worst ? Eagerly we raised him from the ground and bore him gently to a comfortable resting-place. British orderlies crowded round him, vying with each other in their desire to minister to him. A cigarette was placed between his lips, a cup of hot tea in his hand. But he was far gone. Ah ! so far gone. His sunken eyes

wandered from face to face, hardly seeming to recognise that they were those of his fellow-countrymen. Some colour returned to his pallid cheeks, and gradually came the power of speech. Questions were showered upon him. Who was he? Where had he come from? What regiment did he belong to? How was it that he was alone, and in such a desperate plight, at Islahie? To each and all he replied almost unintelligibly. He did not know who he was. He was a British infantry private from the force which had tried to relieve Kut. He had attacked. He had been wounded. He had lain for two days—or was it two years?—in the sun, and supposed he had then been picked up by the Turks. He had had typhus, and so had some others. Where were they? He did not know. Perhaps they were dead. Would we let him stay with us? Would we *promise* not to abandon him? . . . Poor fellow! His fears, of course, were groundless. Nothing would have induced us to leave him to his fate. Though his days were numbered, he came with us, and found peace at last.

It was on June 14th, 1916, that we set out in light four-wheeled carts from Islahie for the march over the Anti-Taurus Mountains. The carts did not arrive in camp till 4 p.m., and we had been told that we should start at daybreak when everything had been packed and made ready. At that time we were new to the ways of the country, so we spent an uncomfortable

day sitting on our valises. It would have been better to have postponed all preparations till the carts arrived. In Turkey the routine prior to the start of a journey by road is always much the same. The sternest orders are issued overnight to all and sundry that the caravan will actually move off at earliest dawn. Everyone agrees and expresses the greatest satisfaction; and no one believes it, or has the slightest intention of stirring till roused by someone else when the sun is above the horizon. The camp is soon wrapped in slumber, save for a sentry who discharges his rifle to show that he is awake, and then follows the others into the land of dreams, unless perchance the local brigands are dissatisfied with their payment and disturb his sleep with a bullet or two.

At dawn the sentry wakes and proceeds to kick various swathed forms, who unroll themselves and call down the curse of the Prophet on his head, but hasten to make some show of preparation for a start before the Turkish officer appears from his small tent. The officer soon issues forth, unshaven and unwashed, and then there is pandemonium. He storms, he curses, he lays about the drivers of the carts with his whip, while they pass on the blows to their patient, half-starved ponies which they are forcing into the harness. At last all seems ready; the turmoil has waned, and every driver is on his small cart. It is already an hour after dawn. But the officer has not yet got the

eggs which he demanded overnight from the head man of the adjacent village. Where are they? May the female relations of that villain be thrice accursed! Achmed, the orderly, flies to the village as fast as his arms and equipment will let him, and returns at last with the eggs. In his pocket, also, is a *douceur* from the head man, so he is well satisfied.

With shouts and the cracking of whips the caravan starts. A few yards and it halts again. Youssouf's front wheel has finally given out and Djavid's traces have broken. For days Youssouf has been watching that wheel in its struggle against fate, but it has never occurred to him to repair the broken parts. Perhaps it might survive another day, so why bother about it? It will break when it is fated that it should do so. It is *Kismet*. . . . So the wheel breaks, the caravan halts, and the whip descends on Youssouf's shoulders; but to him it is all part of the day's work, and, after all, a few stripes to-day have saved him much work yesterday. Amid confusion and shouting the wheel is tied together with rope, the traces are mended once more with string, and away we go along the uneven road. The more one sees of the Turkish methods of transport the more one marvels at what those methods have achieved. Doubtless the hardiness of men and animals enabled the Turks to win through in spite of those methods. And behind them was the watchful eye and the mailed fist of the German.



Our caravan filed out of Islahie as the sun sank towards the western mountains, and we bumped along a villainous road till dark. Then in the bright moonlight we climbed steadily towards the crest of the range, the road winding round sharp spurs and entering deep and dark ravines. There was no parapet wall to prevent the restive ponies from taking the carts and passengers to destruction in the foaming torrents far below; often they swerved till the wheels were within an inch or two of the edge, and I, whose turn it was to ride in a cart, prepared to jump. But the unruffled calm of the sleepy driver, trusting to luck as usual, was so reassuring that in time I found myself becoming as fatalistic as the Turk himself, and, wrapped warmly in my overcoat, dozed fitfully between two swaying valises. We topped the crest at last, and those on the carts gave up their places to others; and the eastern sky was just paling to dawn as the caravan reached Hassan Begli and settled down for the day.

Daylight showed a very pretty scene. The small Armenian village nestled in a steep gorge leading up from a rippling stream near which we had bivouacked. Numerous trees grew between the little stone houses and followed the line of the cobbled street which ran through the village. Orchards and small fields surrounded the place, so that to us, wearied with eternal deserts, it was indeed a rest and delight to gaze upon this gem in its setting of green.

A ruined castle, on a precipitous spur, overshadowed the cluster of houses, for all the world like a castle on the Rhine, and only the oriental look of the villagers served to banish that illusion.

Baskets full of mulberries could be had for a mere song at this spot, and the small shops in the main street were well stocked with flour, eggs, figs, and butter, so we took the opportunity to replenish our stores. Prices soon began to soar as more purchasers arrived, but the cheapness of some things was remarkable at this and other places which were rather off the beaten track. I remember being told near Yozgad that the market price of eggs was *fourteen to the penny!* This was a fact, but the month was June 1916. In 1918 the price was sixpence each. Before the war I do not suppose that a man could have lived in moderate comfort anywhere in the world cheaper than in Anatolia, where the charges in a small hotel amounted to about £1 a week for board and lodging. But those days vanished with the war and probably will never return. Every town in the interior of Anatolia seems to be amply supplied with local produce and is to a large extent self-supporting. The population tends to diminish rather than to increase, owing to contagious and infectious diseases and to the endless succession of wars in which Turkey is fated to be engaged, so there is generally enough food for all who can scrape together even the smallest sum of money.

Our stay at Hassan Begli was short, but the few hours in the shade of the willows bordering the mountain stream were very welcome, and we passed the time in sleeping, bathing, and washing our travel-stained clothes. Bathing in the chill water of a stream at most a foot deep, at a height of over 3,000 feet, is not undiluted joy, and washing clothes in cold water with a minimum of inferior soap is an abominable job ; but the bath was refreshing, and the clothes were slightly improved, so we scrubbed for dear life and astonished the local male inhabitants, who watched our ablutions with curiosity not unmingled with pity that such energy should be wasted on cleanliness. In the afternoon the carts arrived and were loaded with valises, cooking-pots, and stores, and before dusk the caravan had begun the steep descent towards Mamourie.

The descent of a caravan of Turkish carts down a mountain road is a wonderful sight, but to be a passenger in one of those carts is too exciting for the average European. The gradients are as steep as will allow a pony to get a foothold, there is no parapet wall to prevent a cart from falling headlong to the bottom of the ravine, and *there are no brakes*. Add to these facts that the harness is largely of string, that the ponies are only half trained, and the driver is a fatalist of fatalists, and you can picture the state of mind of the unhappy passenger unused to the ways of the country. I sat in

the back of my cart and hoped for the best. The most threatening danger was from the pole of the cart behind. That pole seemed to be usually pointing directly at the centre of my body, and, when my cart was checked, it thrust at me like the lance of a cavalryman. The best defence was to roll on to one's back and parry the thrust with one's boots. This was an exhausting game, and its efficacy was doubtful in the dark, but it generally saved the situation and it kept one warm.

About midnight the caravan halted at the foot of the mountain and we slept in our valises till dawn, when a start was made for Mamourie. There we entrained and steamed through cultivated and fertile country to Adana, and so eventually to the little station of Kulek, beyond which lay the main range of the Taurus Mountains. For some hours we had been within a few miles of the sea, but the country was so flat that it was not visible. Kulek is close to the town of Tarsus, famous as the birth-place of St. Paul, and a few senior officers, who were allowed to drive to the town, returned with a wonderful tale. They said that they had called at the Tarsus Post Office to see if there were any letters for them, and that, while searching through a pile of correspondence, they had unearthed a letter addressed to St. Paul. Presumably the envelope must have been open, for they added that the letter was *a reply to the Epistle to the Corinthians, still undelivered!* An

example of Post Office methods in Turkey! Of course it is impossible to doubt the word of a very senior officer, but the tale amused the camp.

The Germans and Austrians were hard at work on a gigantic railway-tunnel through the Taurus Mountains as well as on another in the Anti-Taurus Range. These works were of the utmost importance to the Central Powers, since their completion would provide an uninterrupted line of railway communication from Constantinople to Aleppo, and thence either to the south towards Palestine or eastwards towards Mosul. The two breaks in the line in 1916, caused by the ranges of mountains, prevented the Germans and Turks from sending reinforcements and stores rapidly to the Syrian and Mesopotamian fronts. The Germans had decided, before the war, that a Berlin-Byzantium-Baghdad railway was essential to their plans for world-dominion, and it was indeed fortunate for the Entente that that line was far from complete when war was declared. With typical bombast the Huns had labelled many of their railway-carriages 'Berlin-Baghdad Through Carriage.' Several of these lay in sidings at Kulek and elsewhere. I suppose these huge labels impressed the ignorant country-folk in the interior, but in the region of the Taurus Mountains they could deceive no one and were merely ridiculous.

Pending the completion of the tunnel through the Taurus Mountains, the Germans had arranged a very elaborate motor-lorry service over that

range. It was run entirely by Germans and Austrians, and the Turks had no say in it. There must have been hundreds of lorries on the road every day and the organisation seemed very good. We were pleased, therefore, when we were told at Kulek that we should make the journey over the mountains in these lorries. A tall German major was in charge of the transport—stiff as a poker, spectacled and bullet-headed. He listened to no requests, and was brusque, surly, and dictatorial, but he was at least efficient and punctual.

The Germans were so eager for the completion of their railway-tunnels that they induced the Turks to employ most of the British prisoners from Kut on this work. The valleys in the mountains were malarial and the work was very hard, and thus arose the terrible conditions under which our rank and file laboured and died. But the dauntless spirit of the survivors could not be quelled by hardship and suffering. They retained their pride of race, and, though prisoners and seemingly helpless, they did their utmost to hinder their enemies and help their friends, even at the risk of flogging, starvation, and death. Let me recount a conversation with a soldier from one of the prisoners' camps near a railway-station in the mountains.

"Well, sir," said he, "it was like this. There was a dozen of us in my squad, and we was doin' shuntin' work, and what not, in the sidin's of a large railway-station. Old Achmed, our

*onbashi* [Corporal], was a sleepy old bird, so we talked it over among ourselves and, says I, 'Look here, boys, we may be something prisoners, weary Willies, down-and-outs, etc. etc., but what I says is we can still do our bit to spoil the arrangements of the blarsted Huns if we set down to it straight.' So then we put our minds to it, and we didn't 'alf play old Harry.' "

"Glad to hear it," said I. "And what did you do?"

"Well, sir, we got some of that 'ere hemery powder from an Armenian fitter bloke, and a small fret-saw. Then we waited till some more of those b—— Austrian airyplanes come into our siding before goin' on to Jerusalem. And then I strolls quiet like to the *onbashi*, and I says ' 'Ullo, *Kai-kmaam* [lieutenant-colonel], *choke-ayee bukshee* cigarette?' holding out a handful. So he takes a few and smokes like billy-oh behind a wagon with me in front of him doin' the perlite and passin' the time of day. Meanwhile my mates was at it like sailors out for a 'oliday. They put a nice 'andful of hemery into every airyplane cylinder and sawed almost through every strut, but not quite. Oh no! Not quite. Lord! I would 'ave given somethin' to see those airyplanes take the air."

And thus the survivors in the Taurus did their best for their country! I wish I could have done as much. Certain death would have been

the lot of every man caught damaging the aeroplanes, and well they knew it. But the success of their work was shown later when General Allenby's armies were sweeping the enemy from Syria. A letter then fell into the hands of his troops, addressed from the Austrian Air Force Commander on the Syrian front to his immediate superiors. In that letter he complained bitterly of the state in which his aeroplanes reached him, and he added that hardly any were fit to fly. Well done, indeed, Comrades of the Taurus!

After one night in tents at Kulek railway-station we set out in German lorries for Bozanti. A few miles of dusty road brought us to the foothills of the Taurus Range, and then began the long climb up the mountains. My chief recollection of this trip is the extreme heat, and the barren and waterless nature of the country. It was June. The sun beat down with terrific force from the cloudless sky, and the hot blast of the wind seemed to come from a furnace. My lorry had no hood, and the ironwork was soon too hot to touch, but our battered helmets and dark glasses saved us from sunstroke. The road ran in gigantic loops between deep and stony ravines. There was not a drop of water save at one or two drinking-places where a spring had been enclosed, and the slopes were bare of vegetation. Truly a desolate and forbidding country. It was a relief to reach the German hospital camp



at Dijam Alam, at a height of nearly 5,000 feet, where there was shade and the air was cooler. German doctors and nurses strolled out to have a look at us, and German soldiers, wearing only trousers and boots, crowded round the lorries, silent and curious.

Another hour and we were in the famous pass known as the 'Cilician Gates,' through which the armies of Alexander and Barbarossa had streamed eastwards in ancient days. Then the scenery changed suddenly from the barren wastes of the East to the fertile pastures of the West. The mountain-slopes, as we dropped down to Bozanti, were wooded; the gorges held foaming torrents, and flowers grew on all sides. So sudden and remarkable was the transformation that it was almost incredible, and one could imagine oneself in Switzerland.

As the lorries ran into Bozanti I saw a man working alongside the road, and thought at first that he was an Armenian, as there had been many gangs of these unfortunate people breaking stones higher up the hill. But this man seemed different. He had none of the cringing air of the hereditary victims of the Turks. Then he straightened up and waved his hand. "Keep up your hearts," he shouted. A British soldier! He followed us later and told us that he was from the Dardanelles, and was one of a party of fourteen. So at last we had met a comrade from the West! It was intensely interesting, and he gave us much news about

Gallipoli, though his tidings were far from cheerful.

Bozanti was full of British supplies, abandoned when the troops evacuated the Dardanelles. Cases of biscuits, barrels of cheese, tins of jam and all sorts of other provisions were stored there, or were on sale in the shops. They spelt the failure of a gallant enterprise. But was it really a failure? At least it saved Mesopotamia, and possibly Egypt.

I was kneeling beside a small stream at Bozanti, busy with soap and towel, when I found a man beside me dressed as a Turkish doctor. He watched me in silence for a time, and seemed friendly, so I opened the conversation and wished him good evening.

"You are from Kut-el-Amarah?" said he, in English.

"Yes," I replied.

"Then you will tell me how the affairs are there? Is it not so?"

"You are a Turk, and I am British. Sorry I can't tell you anything."

"A Turk? Ah, no! You make mistake. I am not Turk." He glanced carefully around. We were alone.

"I am not Turk," he repeated. "I am Armenian doctor. Listen! I will tell you. My family they lived at Aintab. I went to Beyrout to study to be doctor. Then came this war, *si terrible*. I was almost qualified. The Turks say to me, 'You must be military doctor,'

but I refuse. Then they destroy my home at Aintab. They kill my brother, they ruin my sister. My old mother alone is left. To save her I become Turkish doctor. Perhaps she still alive. Who knows? Ah! may all the troubles of the world fall on the accursed Turks! May they perish in everlasting torment! As for me, nothing matters. But listen! I am doctor and I give medicines to Turks. When I give medicines, *then* I think of my mother and sister. You understand, my friend? *It is good to be doctor sometimes.*"

"I am sorry for you," I replied. My mind ran upon a certain text beginning 'Vengeance is mine . . . ' and the cold-blooded retribution of the Armenian struck me with horror. Yet who was I to plumb the depths of this man's misery? Persecution, such as this, will drive a man to crimes against the human race.

The Armenian was silent for a time, pondering deeply. Then he turned to me again with a smile, and continued:

"And now, *Monsieur le Capitaine*, you will tell me of Iraq? What forces have the English? Will they soon drive the Osmanlis into the Tigris? I, an Armenian, would wish to hear it."

"I am sorry," I repeated, "I have never met you before, and I can tell you nothing except that I am quite sure that the disaster at Kut will be avenged. What is the loss of one division to a country like England?"

" *Eh bien!* If Monsieur refuses to speak it is a misfortune. But there is one rumour of which I wish the truth. Monsieur will doubtless tell me. There is no harm. Is it true that General Townshend's daughter was killed by a shell in Kut? "

" *Killed by a shell in Kut?* Are you mad? Of course there were no ladies with our force."

" *Pardon, Monsieur!* There is no doubt the lady was in Kut. It is reported in the papers. But I wish to know if unfortunately she was killed by a shell."

" Don't be an idiot! I have told you there were no ladies there. Is it likely that we should have ladies with us when advancing into a savage country like Mesopotamia? "

" It is possible, but if Monsieur assures me it was not so, perhaps the papers lied. Yet surely a *generalissimo*, so far from home, would have his family with him? It could be arranged, without doubt. A Turkish commander would see to it. But you English are unique. Regulations, you say? Ah, yes! They are made for the common soldiers, *n'est-ce pas?* This is a matter for *generals*."

He departed, shaking his head and still unconvinced; and I rolled up my small towel and wended my way back to the bivouac pondering on the privileges of Turkish officers and of generals in particular. A Turkish officer seems to take no pride in setting an example to his men of obedience to regulations common to all, nor

do those men expect for an instant that the officer will himself be bound by regulations which apply to them. The officer is a god. He is not of human clay. He may sink to that depth if a still higher official is present, but, on the departure of the great one, he regains his god-head and ceases to be bound by earthly rules. He has the power of life and death. At his word, beating and imprisonment become the fate of all who may, or may not, have offended. There is no appeal. There is no redress. He reigns supreme.

On a dark night our train steamed out of Bozanti, high up in the Taurus Mountains, and descended steeply through deep gorges towards the plateau of Central Anatolia. It was a precarious undertaking. There was no continuous brake on the train, but each carriage had a boy on a platform at one end whose job it was to apply a hand-brake if he thought the train showed signs of running away. Ideas on this point seemed to differ. Some boys were 'speed merchants'; others were of the 'safety-first' type. But they struck the happy mean, and the train never left the rails, though it swayed alarmingly at times. On the platform of each carriage there was also a Turkish or Arab soldier, armed to the teeth, to prevent any attempt at escape. So frightened were these guards that it was almost impossible to induce them to allow us to leave the carriages for an instant. This tribute to the daring of the British captive may

have been flattering, but it was very inconvenient and annoying, packed tightly, as we were, in the narrow corridor carriages. It is difficult to sleep with someone's feet across your legs and a weary head pillowed on each shoulder. One fellow became so desperate after repeated kicks and jolts that he decided to try the floor, dirt or no dirt. He lay there, between the seats, for half an hour, and then struggled through the canopy of legs above him in a state of combined suffocation and fury.

And thus the long night wore on, a specimen of many similar nights which had to be endured before the train journey finished at Angora. At dawn the engine protested, and finally slowed down to a dead stop. We were still in the mountains but had met a slight up-grade. This had proved beyond the power of the locomotive, stoked only with wood, and hence the trouble. Heads immediately appeared from all the carriage windows, and the owners were soon trying to convince the guards that they should be allowed to go to a stream a hundred yards away to wash. The Turks would have none of it at first, and shouted "Yussak! Yussak!" at the tops of their voices; but in time they gave in, induced to do so by the gentle art of 'wangling.' So important was this art that I must describe a typical instance which I saw from a window at Yozgad.

'Ginger' Hall lolled on the window-seat of the orderlies' room and gazed with longing eyes

at a broken wooden joist projecting from the garden wall below. Wood was scarce. Dry wood was not to be had for love or money. And there, within a dozen yards, was enough dry wood to light his officer's stove and his own for the next month. It was maddening. The whole of the wooden railing encircling the small terraced garden had disappeared bit by bit and night by night, and now there remained nothing but that projecting beam just over the sentry-box, so near and yet so far. Where was the sentry? Ah! there he was, behind a small fruit tree, playing with the latest mongrel which had been added to the pets of the house. Why, it was old Abdullah! The genial old rascal who had eaten many a slice of bread and treacle in that very room.

Now was the time for action! Ginger's ideas took concrete shape and he arose briskly, extracting a small saw from under his mattress and balancing a cigarette behind his ear. He stopped for a few moments outside the house to scoop up some moist clay in his left hand and then wandered slowly towards the old Turk. He wished him good morning in his best Turkish, played with the puppy for a moment or two, and subsiding quietly on the ground, *with his back to the broken beam*, gazed thoughtfully upon the countryside. Abdullah, tired of the puppy's antics, squatted beside him, and silence reigned for some minutes. Conversation then started in broken Turkish on such topics as when the war

would end, the character of Germans in general, the price of *ekmek* (bread), and so gradually to the scarcity of wood. There it lingered, and Ginger bemoaned the hardness of his lot in his unending search for ever so little dry wood for his stove. Slowly the handle of his saw was allowed to peep from under his coat, slowly his hand opened to show the lump of wet clay, and gradually his fell purpose penetrated to the brain of old Abdullah, who knew that wooden beam better than his own face. But not a look was thrown towards the beam.

Suddenly the subject was dropped, and, with a gay smile, Ginger produced the cigarette and handed it over. Without a word about the beam from either, it was understood by both that the matter had now been arranged. Abdullah rose slowly, stretched his arms, and marched ponderously to the other end of his beat, where he talked loudly to another orderly for the next two minutes. The instant his back was turned Ginger flew at the projecting beam and sawed like mad. The rasping sound echoed around the walls, and in a minute that piece of dry wood was under Ginger's coat. A dab of wet clay on the newly cut wood and he was off like a hare, while old Abdullah wandered slowly back puffing his cigarette.

That is true 'wangling' as understood and respected in Turkey.

Our stranded train in the Taurus Mountains moved off at last when sufficient steam had been



raised to negotiate the slope, and the journey continued towards Eregli. We reached the cultivated tracts of the Anatolian plateau and made good progress, passing through Eregli and Karaman and so to Konia, where there was a halt for some hours. The American Consul at Konia came to the station and told us much about the work he was doing among the Armenian refugees. Through his energy many lives had been saved, but he was sadly hampered by lack of money. All the Hindu officers from Kut were ordered to alight at Konia, where a camp had been prepared for them; and, later on, at Eskichehr, the Mahomedan officers and their orderlies were removed and established in a separate camp. Thus it was that only British officers and orderlies made the journey eastwards from Eskichehr to Angora and thence to distant Yozgad in the wilds of Central Anatolia. Passing through Afiun Karahissar, where there were some British prisoners from the Dardanelles, we arrived in Eskichehr and were allowed to find accommodation for the night in hotels and empty houses in the town. Both Eskichehr and Afiun Karahissar played a prominent part in the war between Greece and Turkey in 1922, but in 1916 they were little known to the general public and showed few signs of the turmoil of war. Both were rather sleepy, dirty, yet picturesque towns, typical of the country.

In the early morning at Eskichehr I was looking out of an upper window when I noticed

a crowd of old men and women, and many children, sitting in the roadway in the market-square. Around them was a cordon of gendarmes, armed with rifles, who laughed and smoked cigarettes and seemed oblivious to the presence of the captives. I asked who the unfortunate people might be, and was told that they were Armenians who were being sent away. "Sent away?" said I. "Where to?"

"The Turks know," replied my Greek informant.

"But what have they done to be treated thus?"

"I have said that they are Armenians, Monsieur."

"They are all very old or mere children. Where are the others?"

"How can I tell, Monsieur? The young men and women must have been sent away already."

'Sent away.' What did he mean by that? All these old folk could not have committed such crimes as to warrant their removal to prison as criminals. And what about the children? I looked again at the wretched Armenians, and slowly the dread significance of the Greek's phrase sank into my brain. The answer to my question was writ indelibly on the features of all in that melancholy group. If ever human faces depicted the most utter misery and despair they were those before me. The poor creatures lay on their tattered blankets in the mud, or sat leaning against the small bundles which held all their worldly goods, motionless, apathetic, and

exhausted. A few were eating crusts of black bread, and some were talking in low tones, but, for the most part, they rested silently where they lay, and in their hollow eyes I saw that which I can never forget.

It was in April 1915 that Enver Pasha's order for the extermination of the Armenians issued from Constantinople. The plea was that they had supplied information and given assistance to the Russians, the hereditary and bitter enemies of the Turks. Organised massacres and deportations then started, and by the end of the year one-third of the two millions of Armenians in Turkey had perished, the greater number being from the smaller and more isolated towns and villages. Of the remainder, some escaped to the Russians, and some were unmolested as they lived in Constantinople, Smyrna, or other large cities.

The Turks usually descended on an Armenian village without warning, collected the men and boys, and marched them away under a strong guard, giving out that they were being *sent away* to some distant place. A few miles from the village the Armenians were then shot down or otherwise disposed of. The men having been marched away, the Armenian women and children were told to prepare to follow them, and this they did, under a strong guard, within a few days. Their oppressors then either murdered them as they had done the men, or they marched them so far and cruelly that they dropped and died

by the wayside. Those who won through to Aleppo (the usual destination of the convoys) reached that place stripped of almost every rag, degraded, and often raving mad. They were then interned in camps in the desert, where they perished from disease.

This was the foul work of Enver Pasha, carried out with the approval of Talaat Pasha, the Minister of the Interior. Religious fanaticism was not the cause of this persecution. It was a deliberate policy, concocted in cold blood and carried out systematically. Enver Pasha seized the opportunity, afforded by the isolation of Turkey in the war, to carry on the policy of extermination initiated by Abdul Hamid II which brought about the massacres of 1895-6. Abdul Hamid, himself the son of an Armenian woman, was responsible for many thousands of deaths, but his villainy was far surpassed by Enver in the massacres of 1915.

At Yozgad the officer-prisoners of war were confined in a group of large empty houses which had belonged to Armenians. These were some of the best houses in the town, and their former occupants must have been people of comparative wealth and some education. To all enquiries as to the absence of the owners, the Turks professed the most profound ignorance. They supposed that the Armenians must have decided that they could make no more money in the town. They supposed that they had been afraid of the epidemic of typhus and had migrated to Kaiserie

or Angora. They supposed this. They supposed that. And it was only after many months that they inadvertently admitted that the Armenians had been 'sent away' by them. The hillside opposite the camp was covered with the ruins of empty Armenian houses, and one of the Turkish guards was in the habit of boasting of the part he had himself taken in the murder of those wretched people. In one of the larger houses an officer found some notebooks containing translations from Armenian into French, written in a childish hand—the last, probably, that the unhappy child ever made. Alas that this world should hold such tragedies!

We arrived by rail in Angora (the ancient Ancyra of Galatia) on June 21st, and so completed our journey over the Anatolian railway. In 1916 the town was of no great importance except that it was the terminus of the railway running eastwards from Constantinople via Eskichehr, and was a trading centre for the surrounding country. Like all the large towns of Central Anatolia it lay mostly in a valley with bare hills around. Its cobbled streets were dirty and uncared-for, and its houses dilapidated and unsanitary. Far from prepossessing in general appearance, the place had, nevertheless, a beauty of its own as we saw it for the first time in the bright morning sunlight which shone on its rugged fortress and the slender minarets of its numerous mosques.

Our stay in Angora was not a happy one.

The Turks had taken offence, and we were punished accordingly with confinement in an empty barrack on a bleak hillside where water was scarce and fuel almost unobtainable. But I have no wish to dwell on these matters inseparable from the lives of prisoners, and not confined to Turkey. Rather would I try to describe events which show the peculiar Ottoman character in its true light. Suffice it to say that we were glad to shake the dust of Angora from our feet after a few days, and set forth by road on the journey of 120 miles to Yozgad, which was now announced as our destination.

Day by day we travelled eastwards in mountainous country, partly on foot and partly in light four-wheeled carts, bivouacking near the road each night and starting again soon after daybreak. There were evidences of railway construction at various places, as the Turks were prolonging the Angora line towards Kaiserie. The road was kept in repair mostly by gangs of Armenians, of whom we encountered many, all working under armed guards of Turks. One Armenian approached me and asked where we were going, -so I told him we were bound for Yozgad.

"And how many *slaves* are you?" he enquired in English.

"Slaves?" I replied. "We are not slaves, but soldiers captured by the Turks. We are prisoners of war."

"I do not understand," said he.

Nor did I understand his difficulty, but I found later that the Turks have but the one word to express both 'slave' and 'prisoner of war,' and the Armenian thought that the same held good in English. From the Turkish point of view a captive taken in war *is* a slave, so the need of another word does not arise.

Near the Kyzyl Irmak, the only river of any size in the interior, we saw some deserters from the Ottoman army on their way to judgment and prison. They were all heavily manacled, in spite of the heat and the long march which they were making. So heavy were their chains that they could only move at a slow shuffle, and the clanking of the iron was audible long after they had disappeared down the road. This medieval barbarity is a thing to which it is difficult to become accustomed in the twentieth century. Perhaps barbarity upholds discipline in a semi-savage land, yet it offends the European mind and it cannot but embitter the friends of the victims, however uncivilised they may be.

It was on June 30th, 1916, that our caravan at last reached Yozgad, two months after the surrender at Kut. In that two months we had travelled nearly 2,000 miles over desert and mountain, and we were weary of our nomadic existence. Many were ill, and the rest so thin and worn that their clothes hung loosely on their tired bodies while they marched mechanically

on and ever on. Whatever the future might have in store, Yozgad meant rest and peace for a time, and the enforced seclusion gave opportunities for studying the home life of the peculiar people of Anatolia among whom, by the stern decree of fate, we were destined to live.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE TURK AT HOME

East is East, and West is West,  
And never the twain shall meet.

LIFE, to the Turkish mind, should be a dignified stroll through the fields of experience to a haven of rest and oblivion. With measured tread each man should walk that path, pausing here and there to admire the beauties of Nature, to cull a blossom or escape a thorn. The path is beset with thorns, pleasant though it may appear, so it behoves the wanderer to move slowly and with due caution. Wild beasts lurk in the thickets to right and left, and haste may encourage them to the attack. A life without periods of contemplation is a desert without oases, and contemplation is both a joy to the mind and a necessary safeguard against the machinations of evil men. The body is the casket of the mind. It needs care and protection for the welfare of the mind, and these it will repay in pleasures of the senses ; but it requires only to be shielded from disease and to maintain sufficient power to nourish the mind. It is waste of time to develop the frail body beyond the requirements of the mind or soul. The pleasures of bodily strength are a delusion

and a snare. They dwindle with age ; but the mind advances in knowledge, and with knowledge comes power. To acquire power, prestige, and wealth, it is unfortunately necessary to go forth into the world. This duty falls upon the body and entails exertion. But, when the duty is done, the body has played its part and has earned its repose. Let it rest, while the mind resumes its search for riches or glory. Games are for children whose brains are immature ! It is undignified for men to join in such childish rivalries. A tired body means an incapable mind, so let the body rest in peace.

Thus reasons the Turkish mind when uninfluenced by Western ideas. We of the West, trained from earliest youth in the traditions of sport, find difficulty in understanding these ideas. Our bodies cry out for exercise as a recreation. No day is complete without its tennis, golf, hockey, or walk. But we have been raised in a land where the sun lacks the power to evaporate the energy from a man's frame, where food is good and plentiful and the very air exhilarating. Transplant us to a land of heat and scarcity for many generations, and I imagine that voluntary exercise would not loom so largely in our daily life. Yet, made as we are, exercise and recreation are essential to our health, and this is a matter that the Turk is slow to comprehend.

The scene is at Yozgad. We are lying on small mattresses on the boarded floors in an

empty house, debating what we shall do. For more than a fortnight we have never left that house except to march to the next one for meals. Outside each door is an armed sentry. There are seventy of us in the house, and no space even to walk. The summer sun shines brilliantly on the tiled roofs and swaying poplars of the town, and the little country carts rumble down the narrow street, but we are caged and helpless. There are half a dozen novels to read, though many pages are missing where the more exciting scenes occur, and a few greasy packs of cards help to pass the hours in bridge or patience. The acrid smoke of Turkish tobacco fills the air, and conversation turns from one subject to another, but always ends in conjectures on this or that, for there is no definite news about anything.

"I say, Bill," draws the Skipper, "this is a bit thick, isn't it? What do the blighters think we are? Ruddy oysters or hermit crabs, or what? How long ago was it that you asked that worm Moise, the interpreter, to get leave for a walk?"

"Dunno, Skipper. Think it was a week last Tuesday. By the way, is to-day Friday or Saturday? Blessed if I know. Here, Old Un! *You* ought to know the day. What d'you make it?"

A burst of profanity from the Old Un, who has run a needle into his finger for the tenth time in half an hour.

"I wish to goodness, Bill," he remarked, "you

wouldn't spring these problems on me when I'm darning my only pair of socks. How the blazes you expect a chap to calculate the date and manage a needle at the same time is beyond me. How should I know what day it is? Wasn't yesterday the same as to-day and every other day? Sit down to it, my lad, and do your own rotten arithmetic!"

"All right, Old Un," returns Bill. "No offence! Suck your finger, darling. Or shall I kiss the place and make it well? No? Well, never mind! But listen! I hear the fairy footfalls of our dear 'Pimple' [Moise] outside. And who is that with him? Ah! A doctor! Now we shall see what we shall see. . . . Good morning, Mr. Moise. Can we speak to Monsieur le Docteur?"

"*Bon jour*, Messieurs," says the Pimple, saluting. "The doctor *effendi* has come to see if you are all in good health and satisfied."

"Look here, Mr. Moise," ejaculates the Skipper, "when is the commandant going to let us have a walk? We are sick to death of asking to be let out. What harm could it do? It is impossible to escape from Yozgad. The first time we asked for a walk you said that the commandant was too ill to consider the request. The next time you said that the commandant thought it might be dangerous because the inhabitants were hostile at the moment. The third time you said that there was sickness in the town and a risk of infection. We never have a

chance of seeing Kiazim Bey, the commandant, and I doubt if he exists. If there is such a person, why does he never come to see us ? Anyhow, I hope the doctor *effendi* will listen to our complaints and let us out for some exercise."

" *Restez tranquille*, Monsieur," answers the interpreter ; " the doctor *effendi* is come to examine into your state of health. I will translate for you."

" Very well, then. Please tell him that for seventeen days we have been shut up here and have had no exercise. If we are not ill at present, we shall be very soon. There is no space in these crowded rooms. Ask him how long the Turks intend to keep us shut up like criminals. There will be trouble when the American Ambassador at Stamboul hears of it."

The Pimple translates to the spectacled doctor, who smiles, shrugs his shoulders, and talks rapidly for a minute.

" The doctor *effendi* asks," says the Pimple, " why you wish for exercise. He says it may be dangerous in the town, and that these rooms are sanitary."

" Tell him that we have always been accustomed to daily exercise, and cannot keep fit without it."

Another pause while the Turks confer. Then from the Pimple :

" The doctor *effendi* says he cannot understand. You have completed a long journey, and you are *très maigre*. There is no *necessity* that you go

out into the country, for you have no business. Therefore, why go? The rooms are clean, and the sun gives heat in them. You have mattresses. You have some books. You have cigarettes from the town. So be patient and restful! *Lie on your mattresses, read your books, smoke your cigarettes, and be happy. You need not do anything. The war will end soon.*"

And that is Turkey.

But water will wear away a stone, and repeated applications, backed by threats, at last produced the promise of a walk on the morrow. The morrow came and we prepared for the excursion, but nothing happened. The next day brought no better luck; and then suddenly, on the third day, the Turks announced that a walk would start at once. There was great excitement. The mulazim swaggered about with a cheap sword clanking at his side, the chaoush ran hither and thither roaring abuse at the indolent sentries, and a guard of twelve old Turkish soldiers turned out armed to the teeth. We filed out of the gateway, two by two, with soldiers before, behind, and on each side, and marched solemnly and sedately through the town to the open country beyond. There the mulazim called a halt.

"What's up now, Mr. Moise?" I asked.

"The mulazim says you have had a good walk, *Effendi*. It is more than one mile. Now you can rest."

"But we don't *want* to rest! Great Scott!

Call this a walk? We want to go to that hilltop, and that one, and that one," pointing around.

The Pimple translated, and the mulazim pondered and replied.

"The mulazim *effendi* thinks," explained the Pimple, "that his boots will be worn out if he walks so far. You cannot go without him. He orders that you sit down and play."

"*Sit down and play! Play what? Kiss-in-the-ring? Cat's cradles? What does he mean?*"

"He says you should just sit down and play and take the air. He will place the sentries around you so that you will not be molested. Have no fear!"

A close ring of sentries was formed, and we sat down, disgusted, to discuss the situation. The mulazim agreed at last to extend the cordon, and then we started leap-frog and rounders. Never shall I forget the sight of an elderly major giving a 'back' to a still older colonel, and then, in his turn, flying ponderously over his superior officer. It was magnificent, even if it was not war. It was exercise—glorious exercise. It made the blood course through the veins; it revived drooping spirits, and brought joy, laughter, forgetfulness. Turkish gentlemen from the town stopped to gaze open-mouthed at the mad English. Surely these lunatics could not be the desperadoes of whom there had been so much talk? They were afflicted of God, without doubt! And what wonder when, as the newspapers said, their

country was collapsing before the might of Turkey? The Turkish gentry buttoned their frock-coats tighter, lit fresh cigarettes, and inhaled deeply. So these were indeed the British! Well, well! It was a queer world! In Turkey at least an officer knew the dignity of his position, but these British were mere children and crazy at that!

Tired, laughing, and happy for the time, we trooped back to our houses before the evening glow paled on the minarets. What matter if the Turkish sense of the dignity of position had been outraged? We cared nothing for their opinion. In time, perhaps, they would learn that at heart every man is but a grown-up child. His mind may age, yet his body retains some of the elasticity of youth and craves its relaxations; and the more those simple pleasures are withheld, the more does his body cry out for them. This first walk at Yozgad must have been the talk of the town for many a day.

Later on, hockey was started on a small piece of ground, 25 yards long, near our house, and the two little sons of Commandant Kiazim Bey came sometimes to watch the game. They were sallow and expressionless children, greatly impressed already with the dignity of their position as the sons of a bimbashi, and they were always closely escorted by a Turkish soldier. Dressed in sailor suits, white socks, and buttoned boots, they watched the players calmly, never applauding and rarely smiling. Children in



years, but not such as we love in our fair land of England. In time the mulazim himself was so far imbued with the spirit of sport that he joined in one or two mild games of football; and in the winter, when the snow lay thick, he once led his men in a snowball fight against the British officers and orderlies. I do not think that he really enjoyed these new adventures, but that a spirit of emulation seized him and prompted him to rivalry with us.

At Afiun Karahissar in 1918 the British officers lived in two separate camps and could indulge in an occasional game of Rugby football. There was much rivalry between the camps, and the games were fast and furious. The commandant, one Muslūm Bey, announced one day that he would attend the next match as he wished to see the peculiar English game of football. He came, accompanied by his faithful interpreter, and watched the match with interest. Whenever a particularly vigorous tackle was made, or the scrum collapsed in a writhing mixture of arms and legs, he was loud in his applause, though any skilful play passed without comment. But at the end he remarked: "I am a bimbashi who (Allah be praised!) has been in many wars and seen much bloodshed. But *never* have I seen a more desperate battle than this which you call football. The officers have indeed fought well. Are many wounded?"

When the players from either camp were going to the football ground they naturally wore the

usual football kit of jersey, shorts, and stockings. Extraordinary to say, this outraged the Turkish sense of modesty! Ideas on what constitutes modesty in dress must naturally vary among different peoples. After all, dress is largely a matter of convention. There is a tribe in the Sahara of which the men go veiled, as they consider it immodest to show their faces. Throughout the East it is customary for men to keep their heads covered. In Europe a young lady may wear a bathing-dress weighing two ounces provided that she stands on pebbles or sand, and no one will object; but let her step thus on to the highway and Mrs. Grundy screams in horror. Incredible though it may seem, the Turks were dismayed because our footballers *showed bare knees!* Children followed them, yelling with disgust, and pointing at their legs, and angry murmurs rose from men and women. Even when the inhabitants had seen football kit hundreds of times they could never quite get over their sense of the immodesty of this display of nine inches of skin.

An officer of a Highland regiment was summoned before the commandant soon after his arrival as a prisoner, so, to create a good impression, he donned his best kilt and sporran and presented himself at the office in his national dress. But he was refused admittance and sent back to change into clothes which were less indecent! An order was then issued that all officers must appear in public modestly clothed.

And yet a Turkish peasant will strip off his coat and shirt in hot weather and wash himself in the crowded market-place ; and, when on the march, he takes no more thought of the decencies of life than his own patient cattle. The Turkish women of superior class are supposed to be closely veiled when they leave their houses, though there is a strong movement in Constantinople against this fashion. But in many cases the veil is merely a pretence—a gossamer fabric which hides nothing, and indeed attracts attention to bright eyes and pearly teeth. It is a queer world that we live in !

Yozgad is a typical town of Central Anatolia. Around it tower rugged hills whose bare slopes are sparsely covered with coarse grass in summer, but trees are few and far between, except on a hill to the south where some firs have weathered the storms of winter and the depredations of the Turks. In the town itself the poplar flourishes and, gently swaying in the summer breeze, lends a touch of real beauty to the vista of tiled roofs and narrow streets. A stream ripples through the small gardens and fields in the bottom of the valley, whose slopes are crowded with Turkish and Armenian houses ; and here and there among the tiled roofs you will see the tall and slender minaret of a mosque, for all the world like a sharpened pencil pointing to the sky. Legend has it that the desolate country of Anatolia was once covered with dense forest, but gradually the trees have gone to feed the fires of

destructive man, and now the cultivation in the valleys alone helps to relieve the general harshness of the landscape.

At a height of more than 4,000 feet above the sea, the climate of Yozgad in summer is dry and not too sultry—in fact, it would be an ideal spot for a sanatorium—but in winter it is far otherwise. From October to March the place is swept periodically by bitter gales from the Caucasus Mountains to the east. Snow, hail, and sleet drive the people to refuge in their flimsy houses, where they cower over their stoves in hermetically sealed rooms. The temperature falls to below zero, and a period of hibernation seems to deaden the life of the town. Every crack is pasted up with paper to exclude draughts, and stoves are kept red-hot night and day with wood carefully collected during the summer. It is during the long hours in these stuffy rooms that the dread scourge of typhus levies its toll on the inhabitants, but the people argue that existence is only possible in such a climate by keeping the body warm and dry. As for this 'spotted fever,' it is a visitation of Allah, and those who die of it are fated to do so.

The town of 'one hundred springs'—which the name of the place implies—is a sunny and busy spot in summer; but in winter it is the very abomination of desolation. This was the place, 150 miles from the Black Sea and twice that distance from the Mediterranean, which the Turks selected as one of the prisoners' camps for

British officers. They were wise in their selection. The mountainous and almost waterless country around was the surest safeguard against escape, and the climate was as healthy as any to be found in Asia Minor.

The life of a prisoner of war is one which lends itself to the contemplation of nature, though excursions for the study of animal and bird life may be few and far between. Anatolia is not a land which abounds in flora and fauna ; it is too barren and bleak in winter to encourage plant and animal life. But in the summer birds are plentiful, and the naturalists in our camp said that they had noticed several kinds of hawk—kestrel, sparrow, and merlin—also storks, vultures, kites, buzzards, and bustards, as well as crows, wagtails, flycatchers, night-jars, nightingales, golden oriels, swallows, swifts, pigeons, red-legged partridges, and others. The storks gave us much pleasure and amusement. There was ample opportunity to study their ways, for there must have been hundreds of them in Yozgad each summer, nesting on the chimney-tops of the larger houses. The chimneys were covered by large flat slabs of stone. On these smooth surfaces the storks used to build their nests, and I always marvelled that these nests, when empty, survived the blasts of winter and were still in their proper places when the nesting season started.

At the end of March, the winter being over, the storks arrived from Mesopotamia, Syria, and

Egypt, and set to work to prepare their nests and lay and hatch their eggs. The parent birds were very amusing at times. They seemed to serenade each other, and this they did, each in turn, by swinging their heads over backwards and clicking their bills like castanets. The performance lasted for two or three minutes, and the louder the applause of the audience, the more energetic was the clicking. In June the heads of the young storks showed over the edge of the nest, and in the middle of July they were trying to fly. Their attempts at flight were followed with close attention. For some days each young stork took his turn at standing in the nest for a few minutes at a time, facing the wind and merely flapping his wings. Then he would extend the practice to a jump of a few inches off the nest and a descent into it again as quickly as possible. But on July 23rd all the young birds made their first genuine flights. The first youngster did not intend to leave the nest when he jumped into the air, but a gust of wind caught him when two feet above the nest and whirled him away. His first flight was an amazing one. He swayed alarmingly hither and thither, his neck swinging, his legs wobbling, but he alighted at last near the stream a hundred yards away and was followed soon by the other young birds. A considerable sum of money changed hands on account of the date of this first flight, for it had long been a subject for betting. At the end of August all the storks had

left Yozgad on their journey southwards, and we saw them no more till the next spring.

It was only natural that we should keep a certain number of pets, though of course everyone could not do so. Imagine a house with fifty officers, each with his own dog! However, even in the early days at Yozgad, there were a few dogs in each house, and later at Afium Karahissar there was quite a pack. The breeds of dog in Turkey are many. Some of the villagers' dogs are magnificent animals of mastiff breed, fierce and untamed. There is another breed rather like the Chinese 'chow,' and another which I can only describe as Anatolian Pomeranian. Little Judy, belonging to Startin, a doctor-friend of mine, might be classed briefly as an 'Anapom,' and in course of time she gave birth to four little Anapoms on Startin's only easy chair, ignoring the wonderful box which he had evolved as a maternity hospital for this special case. Judy's four little pups, including one called Elsie, thrived on their natural diet, and were given away to various officers and orderlies in the camp. But Elsie was an independent little creature, and had her own ideas of a suitable master, and without any encouragement discarded her appointed owner and chose me. I did my best to discourage her and make her return to her owner, but in the end I had to give it up and accept her presence on my bed as a permanency.

That puppy would never let me out of her

sight. If I stirred from my chair, she opened her eyes ; and if I left the room, she followed as a matter of course. In the street she kept close to heel, but, as we walked past the other houses, she summoned her sister and two brothers with joyous barks and they all joined in. The four midgets kept so close behind me that it was difficult to see them, and the backs of the whole four could have been covered by a pocket-handkerchief. I could rarely walk to the hillside above the camp without my miniature pack in attendance, and they were not always a blessing, as they were fond of chasing small children, who ran away from them, though they never bit anyone.

When we left Turkey it wrung my heart to have to hand over poor little Elsie to be destroyed with most of the other dogs. It would have been cruel to abandon the dogs to the mercy of the Turks, and we could not take them with us, so one sad morning they were chloroformed by a British doctor and thus ended their short lives in peace. Startin, however, took Judy to Egypt with him, and happened to leave her in his room one day in a hotel at Alexandria when he went downstairs to lunch. He returned to find Judy gone. A chambermaid had entered the room while he was away, and poor Judy had been so terrified that she had fled from the house. And the reason ? *Judy had seen a woman for the first time !*

A very remarkable pet was a wolf which I often saw in the lower camp at Afiun Karahissar



in 1918. He was found in the mountains as a tiny cub, and was sold by a Turk to a British officer. When I saw him for the first time he was only a few weeks old, about the size of a very small terrier, and as ugly as anything on four legs could be. His head was then so big for his body that it was a marvel that his neck could support it. As a tiny cub he ate and drank prodigiously, far exceeding any puppy in that line. He was a sociable little beast and wanted to be friendly with the dogs and join in their games, but they always snarled at him and gave him the cold shoulder. And then he began to grow in earnest, and developed in time into a magnificent animal of a greyish fawn colour, with a bushy tail and a beautiful coat, who stood more than two feet at the shoulder. He was less intelligent and less sensitive than a dog, but fairly good-tempered, though he growled fiercely if beaten. No ordinary punishment had any effect on Mr. Wolf—a good thick bludgeon, wielded by a strong arm, was needed to make a lasting impression. His owner took him out for walks when opportunity offered, but the wolf generally left him and chased hares or other animals across country, much to the consternation of peaceful Turks who were working in the fields. I saw him once in the distance, galloping across country in pursuit of some animal, and he was unmistakably a wolf even when half a mile away. No dog ever travelled like that animal, his easy lope carrying him over the ground at an incredible speed with very little

exertion. An attempt was made to take him to Egypt when the war had ended, and I believe he actually reached that country after an unfortunate episode in Smyrna, where he escaped and roamed the streets for several hours among terrified crowds.

But I must revert to my description of the Turks of Anatolia, and particularly to some interesting types which we met at Yozgad in 1916. As a specimen of the Turkish officer of the older generation, the commandant at Yozgad, Kiazim Bey by name, deserves mention. Imagine a man of middle age, tall and erect, dressed always in a uniform frock-coat of light grey, and wearing a woolly Turkish *kalpak* (cap), gold-braided on top. His features aquiline, his hair white, and his movements always extremely slow and deliberate. A semi-invalid, who doubtless had been recalled to service for the war, he led a life of seclusion and indolence. His face was remarkable for its pallor, and from this mask looked a pair of eyes which glinted like those of a hawk. He seldom raised his voice, yet this softness of address was belied by the cruel line of his mouth. His most marked characteristics were his extreme caution, his distrust of all men, his sphinx-like gravity and impassiveness, and his superstition. Of respectable birth, and with the assured position of a *bimbashi* (literally 'commander of 500'), he was ready nevertheless to accept commissions from all shop-keepers trading with the camp.

In his dealings with the prisoners his line was complete inactivity and inaccessibility. He would answer no letters, would grant no interviews, and for months was never even seen. The prophecies of an old hag in the town, who was reputed to be a witch, influenced most of his actions.

The post of commandant in a prisoners' camp was much coveted in Turkey by elderly officers who dreaded the hardships of active service, and it could only be secured by influence at Stamboul, and possibly the judicious distribution of *largesse*. Kiazim Bey, who was one of the lucky ones, felt that his tenure of office hung by a thread, and that the least false step would ensure his replacement by another. He lived, therefore, in terror of the Turkish headquarters, and determined that his safest plan was to block all complaints, rigidly censor all letters, discourage all visits from inspecting officers and neutrals, and keep himself apart from the prisoners. In this line of action, or rather inaction, he showed himself a past-master.

I remember one occasion when Kiazim was superintending the opening of parcels of food and clothing which had arrived for us from England. I was among the lucky few who trooped up to his office to get the supplies sent by kind relations and friends. Arrived at the office, we entered a room where Kiazim sat in state amid piles of parcels, while behind him hovered the interpreter Moise and a swarthy person known as the

'Staff Officer.' Now, among the good things in one of the two parcels addressed to me I expected to find a tin of carbolie tooth-powder, and in that powder I hoped to discover several golden coins. I had sent a postcard to England asking for this tooth-powder, and had added that I had heard that it was much improved by the addition of certain yellow tabloids 'which were made in two sizes only.' Kneeling on the floor, I opened the first of my parcels beneath the watchful eyes of Kiazim himself. A tin of Huntley & Palmer's fancy biscuits fell out, and behind it I spied a tin of carbolie tooth-powder among some other necessaries. It was a time for rapid action. If Kiazim handled the small tin and was surprised by its weight, I was lost. Hurriedly I opened the tin of biscuits, for I knew my Turk. Smiling, I offered it to Kiazim Bey, who saluted, selected a few biscuits, returned the remainder to me, *and at once turned his back*, while I shovelled the contents of both parcels into a sack and left the office. He had his half-dozen biscuits and I my golden sovereigns. For aught he knew I might have acquired a pistol and ammunition, and I am quite sure that he knew that something contraband had reached me. But the custom of the country had been fulfilled. He was satisfied, and as for me, my biscuits had changed to gold.

Commandant Kiazim Bey was assisted by a staff of three junior officers and an interpreter. The first of this quartet was a dusky individual

introduced as the 'Staff Officer.' Anything more unlike the accepted notion of a 'Red Tab' it would be impossible to conceive. 'Sambo, the Coon Staff Officer'—to give him his popular name and title—hailed from Syria and sported the badges of a *yuzbashi* or captain. His duties were nebulous, and I do not know that anyone ever caught him at work. He was often on view in Kiazim's office, reclining on a settee in one corner, his coat unbuttoned, his elastic-sided boots on the floor, his feet tucked under him, and his unshaved and smiling face half hidden in a cloud of cigarette smoke. So swarthy was he that his skin matched the mahogany table on which his glass of coffee rested, and his woolly hair showed the strain of African blood in his veins. A good-natured and tolerant nonentity, who made no attempt to live up to his title.

Another person, known as the 'Commissariat Officer,' can be dismissed in a few words. He was a funny little fellow who rarely showed outside the office, and when he did so, scuttled about like a rabbit, seemingly always in a desperate hurry to return to his hole. But once safely back in his official home, his haste changed to repose, and he pored all day over his ponderous ledgers in the intervals of conversation with the Coon Staff Officer and inhaling the acrid fumes of his Samsūn tobacco.

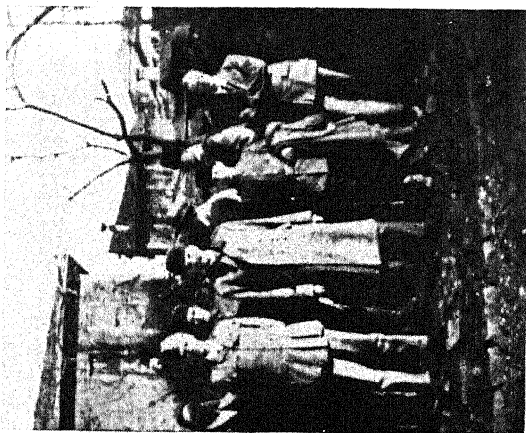
Hassan Effendi, the mulazim for whose boots we subscribed £25, was of a different type again. This fellow was the actual assistant of Kiazim

Bey and was always in and out of the camp. He wore the badges of a *bash-chaoush* (sergeant-major), but was really a species of cadet with the courtesy title of *mulazim*. Hassan came from Smyrna, where he was reputed to be a shop-keeper in times of peace ; but as he was physically fit and strong, his influence at Stamboul must have been considerable to save him from the fighting in Syria or Mesopotamia. He boasted that he had been in Gallipoli where he had been wounded, but I always doubted that wound. A square-shouldered, bullet-headed, and active young man of medium height, his chief endeavour seemed to be to prove that he was a civilised man of the world, superior to the *gaucheries* of the Turks of the interior. Certainly he showed remarkable energy at times, especially when there was money to be made in one way or another ; but his apparent *bonhomie* concealed a scheming mind which was all for gain. Still, he was better than some Turks whom we met, for at least he seemed keen on his work till its novelty wore off.

Lastly enter the 'Pimple,' otherwise *Moise Eskenaz Effendi*, interpreter and spy to Kiazim Bey. Moise was of Jewish origin, tempered with this and diluted with that. I should be sorry to attempt a more definite opinion as to his ancestry. A stumpy little fellow was he, with diminutive legs encased in ill-fitting gaiters, and short-sighted eyes peering through pince-nez. He wore the uniform of a cadet, and on his head

either a *kalpak* or the peculiar Turkish army cap known as the 'enverri.' The Pimple had seen much of the world, though hardly more than a boy, and had been educated for a time in Paris, where he had frequented the Moulin Rouge and other less reputable places of amusement. He was as sharp as a needle, and a very fair linguist, for he spoke Turkish and French fluently, English and German a little, and had a nodding acquaintance with several other tongues. Though his personal appearance was enough to make anyone laugh, he had a great idea of his prowess with the fair sex. The Pimple was the mouthpiece of the Commandant; he transacted all business in the camp, translated all orders, and was ever ready to accept a bribe of chocolate. The presence of Kiazim Bey hung like a dark cloud over his head, and he lived in daily terror of the lightning of the bimbashi's wrath. Though a vain cockerel by nature, he became a grovelling worm in the presence of the mighty Kiazim.

I have described the Turkish staff at Yozgad as they included many different types. The more remarkable specimens were undoubtedly Kiazim Bey and his satellite Moise. I am prepared to admit that all these men were possibly not representative of the better class of Turkish officials, for they were tucked away in a distant place where they could not influence the course of the war; yet they were Turks, at any rate in name, and illustrate the diversity of character in that peculiar nation. Kiazim

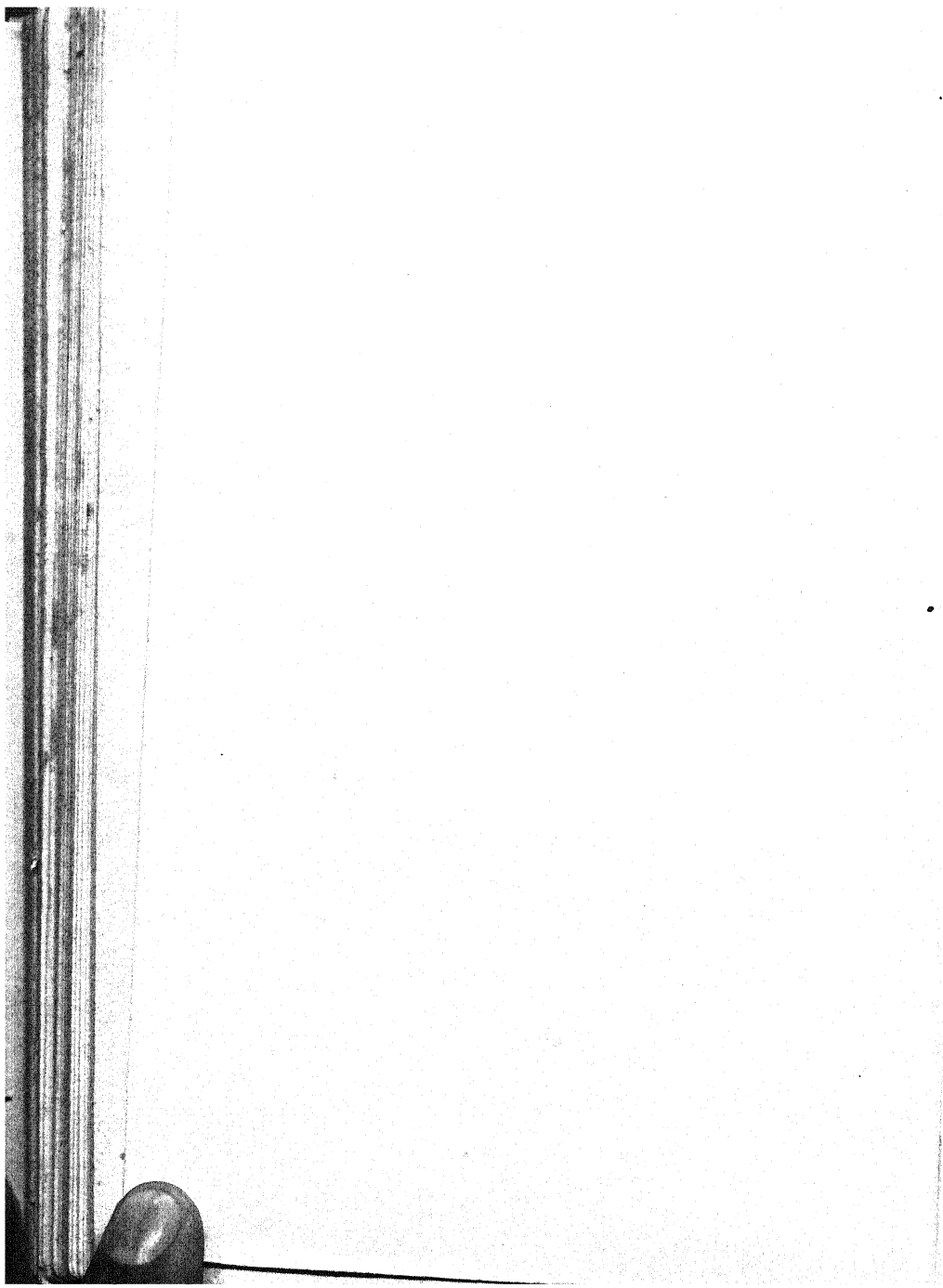


BIMBASHI KIAZIM BEY AND HIS STAFF, WITH  
BRITISH OFFICERS, AT YOZGAD.  
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'DON SANDESO, THE BANDMASTER.'  
The Author.





Bey and Moise Effendi are very ably portrayed in *The Road to Endor*, by E. H. Jones. It is not my place to repeat the extraordinary tale so well told in that book, but, since everybody may not have read that story, a brief account of what occurred while I was at Yozgad will illustrate the hold which superstition and spiritualism may obtain on the Eastern mind, and will lead up to my personal experience of the machinations of Jones's spook.

As will be known to readers of that book, Jones and his friend C. W. Hill held mock spiritualistic séances, in which they pretended to receive messages from persons elsewhere, spelt out letter by letter by a tumbler resting on a metal plate which had the letters of the alphabet round its circumference. Actually the inverted glass was manipulated by Jones himself who thought out the messages as he went along and gave them an appearance of being genuine by introducing facts already ascertained by him, or by wording his replies so that they were ambiguous and induced the dupes to give him unconsciously the clues for further 'spiritual' revelations.

The two friends had, as the end and aim of all their deception, a plan to escape from Turkey; and they actually proposed so to play upon the superstitions of Kiazim Bey that he would unwittingly help them in this project, or at least would take them to a place where escape would be simple. They decided that nothing would rouse Kiazim except the promise of wealth.

The direct offer of a bribe was impossible, for, apart from the fact that the Turk would have refused to accept money from fear of discovery, there was not sufficient cash available. So the conspirators hit upon the brilliant idea of a search for buried Armenian treasure. If only they could induce Kiazim to believe that such treasure existed and that they could obtain the key to its position by supernatural means, their plan had great possibilities. But Kiazim stood aloof. He could not be enmeshed with one cast of the net. Smaller fry must first be caught, and the great fish enticed gradually into the toils by the example of others.

The first victims were the other British prisoners, including myself. So cunningly did Jones contrive his séances, and so cleverly did he avoid all traps and surmount all tests, that most of us became true believers and swallowed with avidity the war news which the 'spook' vouchsafed. The conversion of the British to spiritualism intrigued the interpreter, who was the next victim. The spook promised to reveal untold treasure—in fact, all the buried treasure in the world—and Moise became an ardent communicator with the spirits. Naturally the news reached the commandant, Kiazim Bey, and by slow stages he was attracted, till he became at last a mere puppet in the hand of the spook, whom he consulted in every difficulty, even to the extent of sending to Constantinople a letter under his own signature *dictated by the spook!*

To safeguard himself against any failure in the predictions of the spook, Jones invented a super-spook who was hostile to the spook himself in the spirit-realms. Thus if the spook made a promise which failed to come true, the blame could be thrown on the machinations of the super-spook, and confidence was restored in the faithful spook who was to lead the Turks in the treasure-hunt. The final plan was that the clue to the treasure should be described as being in the Mediterranean, and that Kiazim Bey, Moise and Kiazim's cook-orderly (who was also in the game) should be induced to escort Jones and Hill to the sea-coast and set sail in a boat, when the two British could account for the Turks and shape a course for Cyprus. Truly a wonderful scheme, and one that nearly succeeded ; but Kiazim's nerve failed him at the last moment and the plan came to naught.

Of the details of this business, in which I was involved, and the subsequent adventures of the two British officers, I will not write here. The story throws much light on the superstitious trend of the Ottoman mind, on the wiles of the senior Turkish officer, the Jewish interpreter, and the sly old cook, to be first at the discovery of the Armenian treasure to the exclusion of the others, on their disregard of the fate of the two 'mediums' provided that the treasure was delivered into their hands, and their childlike belief in the supernatural being who was to direct their footsteps.

I decided one evening to attend one of the early séances which Jones himself conducted before he joined forces with Hill. Up to that time, I must confess, I doubted the genuine nature of the messages, though the number of true believers in our house was rapidly increasing. It was about nine o'clock on a dark night that I stumbled up the unlit staircase to the little passage-room where Jones and his friend 'the Doc' sat before the polished iron plate with their hands on the inverted glass. A couple of guttering candles cast a ghostly light on the intent faces of the two operators and the small group of earnest seekers after knowledge who had forestalled me.

"Hullo! Here's 'Don Sandeso, the Bandmaster,'" said Winnie. "Can he work the glass?"

"Speak to the board," reproved Jones.

"Right oh! Bones." Then, addressing the polished plate, "Please tell us if Sandes can work the glass."

The glass shot rapidly from side to side, touching this letter and that, while Alec Matthews took down the message, and the hands of the 'mediums' seemed merely to follow the spasmodic motion of the glass—which indeed was all that the hand of the Doc actually did.

"Yes, he can," spelt the spook's message.

"Thank you. And who with?" asked Winnie.

"Alone," was the answer.

"Surely not!" protested someone. "It takes two to work the glass."

"Curse you!" returned the spook. "*By himself*, I tell you," the glass moving with a vicious smack from side to side.

"Would you like to try it by yourself?" said Jones, turning to me.

"Very well," I replied, and sat down.

I put two fingers on the glass, closed my eyes, and waited in silence for the oracle to speak. Then, as nothing happened, I asked the spook if he would kindly send a message. Slowly, slowly, the glass began to slide; then more and more rapidly. It shot from side to side of the polished surface, spelling out a meaningless jumble of letters. I opened my eyes suddenly to see who was pulling it hither and thither, but no one was touching either the glass or the table. Yet I could have sworn that someone else had hold of that glass. Then the movement changed from zigzags to circles, and finally the glass came to rest in the centre and remained so.

"That seems to be all," I said. "What's the message?"

"Can't make head or tail of it," answered Alec.

Nor was there any head or tail to it. But that experience changed me from a sceptic to a believer, and in this I showed the usual lack of perspicuity of enquirers into the supernatural. The glass certainly moved, apart from my will though

possibly through my agency ; but that well-known phenomenon of independent motion did not prove that a supernatural being was controlling the movement. Yet, given the right environment, the human mind is prone to jump to such conclusions, and one more true believer was added to the fold that night. The speed with which the glass spelt out the messages when Jones was one of the mediums, the cleverness of the replies, and the fact that the twenty-six letters were not arranged in alphabetical order, convinced me that no man, working with his eyes closed, could become so expert as to manipulate the glass as Jones did ; and the phenomenon of the independent movement of the glass, when I was operating alone, completed my conversion. When British officers, with an average share of common sense, could be deceived wholesale, is it surprising that the Turks, raised in an atmosphere of superstition, prophecy, and omens, fell easy victims to the wiles of the spook ?

While in Turkey we saw many evidences of the leanings of the people towards the supernatural. One instance, however, was so remarkable that it must be described. It was in July 1917 that an eclipse of the moon was due, though we did not know it. I had just wriggled my way, one night, into my sleeping-bag on the wooden shelf which did duty as both bed and chair since there was no furniture, when I heard a shot or two fired in the fields near the stream. There was nothing extraordinary in this, for the local

brigands often prowled around the town and exchanged a friendly bullet or two with the *chowkidars* (watchmen) who sat on guard over their crops. In this game no one was ever hit, but custom demanded that the usual exchange of leaden greetings should take place, and I suppose that every chowkidar well knew that if he killed a brigand he would be a dead man himself the next night, and aimed accordingly. However, on this particular night the first shots were followed quickly by others, and the fusillade spread towards our house. Ping! ping! ping! went three bullets over the roof. Here was no ordinary affair of chowkidars and brigands, and we began to speculate on possible rescues, escapes, massacres, rebellions, and other stirring matters. The firing spread gradually through the town, bursting out in salvos and dying away periodically to stray shots here and there, and the bullets whistled in all directions. Old Zabid, the sentry beneath my window, let off his blunderbuss with a deafening roar, and, as he reloaded, I could hear him muttering what seemed like a prayer. Peeping forth to watch his next shot, I saw, to my intense surprise, that he was aiming into the sky as if taking a high pheasant; and at the same moment I saw a Turkish officer on the high-road draw his automatic pistol, point it upwards, and send half a dozen bullets into the blue. Had the whole world gone raving mad? It seemed so. And not till later did I notice that the bright moonlight was



slowly fading, replaced by a ghostly twilight. An eclipse of the moon! Gradually the shadow crept across the face of the satellite and the fusillade from the town slackened as ammunition was exhausted, but many bullets still shrieked into the night till the silver edge of the disc began to reappear, and then at last came silence, and Yozgad slept again.

I asked the Pimple all about it next day.

"Yes," he said, "it was an obscuring of the moon—*une éclipse*. These happen sometimes. It is not important."

"But look here, Mr. Moise," I remarked. "What about all the firing? If one of those bullets had hit me it might have been important *for me*! I cannot honestly say that I admire the ways of your countrymen."

"The bullets could not hit anyone in the camp, Effendi," he assured me, "for they were aimed at the moon."

"*At the moon?*" said I.

"Yes," he replied. "These uneducated peoples have customs. We who have travelled, we are not deceived; but it might be dangerous not to pretend. So when the shadow comes on the moon, it is believed by the ignorant that a devil is attacking her and will extinguish her light *pour toujours* if he is not defeated. Therefore all who have guns or pistols must shoot at the devil till he makes his retirement. It satisfies the common peoples, but to such as us it is ridiculous, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"Very funny, no doubt," I remarked. "But where do the bullets come to earth?"

"*Je ne sais pas*," with a shrug. "It does not matter. We were safe here. If any among the population were killed, it is unfortunate; but there are many such people."

As I turned away I pondered on the surprising customs and superstitions in this funny world. Here was a people who were trained to firearms from earliest youth; who knew that the moon rose beyond the distant horizon; who knew that ammunition was scarce and expensive. And yet, so overwhelming was their superstition as compared with their common sense, that they would spend their hard-earned gains in firing promiscuously into the sky because their witches and soothsayers told them that the earth's shadow on the moon's face was a devil. There were schools in Yozgad where Turkish children were taught on modern lines. I wonder what explanation of the eclipse was given to those young citizens of the Ottoman Empire.

## CHAPTER V

### MUSIC OF THE EAST AND WEST

Music bright as the soul of light  
For wings an eagle, for notes a dove.

SWINBURNE.

HIGH in the blue vault of the summer sky a great bird swung in circles over the sleepy town, and I watched him lazily through the wooden bars of my window. Not a quiver of his outstretched wings explained the marvel of his soaring flight. Higher and yet higher he rose, till he was a mere speck among many others circling in the bright sunshine beneath the fleecy clouds. A hush lay over the town, for the hour was the time of the afternoon siesta. The drone of a bee mingled with the soft rustle of the poplar outside the house, and I found myself sinking into the land of dreams when a sound was wafted by the summer breeze through the open window which brought me to my feet. It rose in volume, then died away in whispers, hushed in the labyrinth of narrow streets below. Anon it rose again and declared itself as a marching song whose refrain was piped by shrill childish voices, still far away.

The children's song grew more distinct, and I watched, in curiosity, for their appearance. Then, down the hill from the market-square, came a procession of small Turks, led by one carrying the national flag—the Star and Crescent—marching proudly and singing as they came.

# TURKISH MARCHING SONG

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The older boys led the way, their juniors followed, and in the rear were mere toddlers who could scarce keep pace with the others. All wore fezzes and tight-fitting coats which sat rather incongruously on their small figures. But they marched proudly and confidently behind the flag of their country which fluttered gaily in the breeze. There were about one hundred young Turks in this procession, scholars from one of the schools in Yozgad ; and, unless their demeanour belied their hearts, Turkey might be proud of these her sons.

As the boys came opposite our house the chant burst out again, and I seized a pencil and wrote it on the back of a copybook. This is what I heard :

## TURKISH MARCHING SONG (1st PART)



This song, in the minor key, gave me the impression of patience under suffering. It seemed to express all the sadness of the fate of Turkey, a land torn with endless war and dissension, a great empire fallen into decay. It was the sigh of a people groaning under the weight

of circumstances which were not of their choosing; yet it expressed, in its latter phases, a determination to rise superior to all trials. The earnest faces of the boys, as they stepped out bravely to the measured beat of the music, made one wonder what fate was in store for these youngsters. Were they also doomed to be swallowed up in the holocaust of war which had engulfed their fathers and grandfathers? We were told that they were orphans, sons of men who had died in a vain effort to save the remnants of their fatherland.

Then the song changed to the major key, and the voices rang out in gladness and triumph. Steps quickened, faces smiled. Here was a different Turkey. This was a people with the will to conquer, to retrieve past misfortunes and errors, to find a place in the sun.

TURKISH MARCHING SONG (2ND PART)



The chant ended with a curious staccato note which was a cry of defiance as surely as it could be expressed in music. A challenge flung to the enemies of the Empire, telling them that the old fighting spirit of the race still lived in the young hearts of the singers and could never be subdued. I wish that I could have written the words of this refrain, for they would have made stirring reading. But the music itself, in the environment in which I heard it, was so clear in its expression that words were almost superfluous.

This Turkish song resembled Western music, and may, perhaps, have been prompted by German musicians. There is an attempt in progress in Turkey to train the people to appreciate European harmony, and I imagine that this song was a specimen of the result. The primitive music of the Anatolian peasant—if music it can be called—is very different. Perhaps it has those elusive quarter-tones which other Eastern music is supposed to contain, and which the Western ear cannot understand or appreciate. These quarter-tones make harmony impossible in the form of chords, so that the chief beauty of music, to our senses, is removed. Everything then depends on the trills and shakes which the singer can introduce into his song, for there is no support from deeper notes in harmony with the air, and indeed it seems to be immaterial what sounds accompany the air. A tom-tom, beaten rhythmically on a note discordant to the key in which the song is sung, is appreciated more fully

than the most carefully studied orchestration. In this barbaric form of music I think that the charm to the audience lies, not in the music, but in the words. The latter are always shouted, not sung; and they pour from the singer's mouth in a torrent. The audience crowds close upon him lest one word should be missed. In primitive Turkish songs the words themselves are usually either extravagant or improper, appealing to morbid sentiment or sensuality. The music seems to be intended to form merely a setting for the words; something to tickle the senses and induce more appreciation of the tale than if the words were spoken instead of sung; something to add to their effect and invoke a suitable mood, whether of fanaticism, anger, sorrow, or triumph. If barbaric music was really appreciated *as music*, the audience would scarcely trouble about the words. I admit that the music of many popular European songs amounts to little if shorn of words; yet that little may still be pleasing, if not arresting.

At a concert given by the British officers at Yozgad, the Turkish officers were placed in the front row, and I had an excellent opportunity of watching them as I was accompanying the singers on a violin. Kiazim Bey sat gravely, with a hand on each knee, his eyes glued to the face of each performer, and his ears straining to catch the rapid translations poured into them by the interpreter. Sambo, the Coon Staff Officer, and Hassan Effendi, were next to him. Now,

some of the singers had fine voices, and many of the songs were classics of English music, but the most tuneful of them failed absolutely to awaken any response in those three Turks. They sat like statues, without an expression on their faces, their utter boredom only thinly veiled by a set smile at intervals. In the most beautiful passages one or other would turn to the interpreter, Moise, with a loudly voiced demand for a translation, or would take a drink of *raki*, clear his throat, and spit on the floor. But when a comic turn came on the stage, the singer dressed for the part, the Turks sat up and took notice. Moise translated in a loud voice, and the antics of the artist behind the smoky footlights were followed with delight and appreciation ; and the more extravagant and violent they became, the greater the applause.

It was after the programme had ended that Sambo, the swarthy *yuzbashi*, well primed with *raki* and leaning on the arm of Hassan, said that he would oblige the British with a Turkish song. We crowded round him in the large hall in anticipation of something new. Clearing his throat and lifting up his head, he burst into a raucous torrent of words, swaying from side to side under the influence of his emotion and his *raki*, and howling like a wolf till the rafters rang again. The front row of the audience recoiled a step or two to save the drums of their ears, and made desperate efforts to keep straight faces while the song continued ; but we, in rear,



frankly laughed till the tears ran down our cheeks. With a final yell, apparently in the middle of a bar, Sambo's song ended abruptly, and he turned to receive the congratulations of his hosts, which were effusive. It was the best comic turn of the evening! Kiazim Bey and Hassan were charmed with their countryman's musical ability, so I asked Moise what it was all about. "It was a song about love and war," he replied. Ye Gods! Was that what the gentle Turkish maiden listened to? Sambo must have been the devil of a fellow with the girls! Yet we asked ourselves if this was really music, even by the wildest stretch of imagination. Was it not rather an harangue, delivered in varying keys and tones? We had had our first experience of the barbaric music of the uncivilised parts of Turkey, and had survived to tell the tale; but it cannot be said that anyone longed for a repetition of the ordeal, or was impressed by Sambo's accomplishment. As a comic turn, to wind up a festive evening, it was glorious; as music it was execrable.

It is curious that any Oriental music which is music at all to our ears has usually a strain of melancholy. Five out of six Eastern melodies are written in the minor key, and it is difficult to assign a reason for this peculiarity. The contemplation of desert wastes, the loneliness of huge tracts of wilderness, the enervating effect of a tropical climate, the forbidding barrenness of rocky mountains—these may incline the

human mind to the dejection and even despair found in so many Oriental melodies. But this feature is so marked that it seems that there must be a strong natural bias of the Oriental mind towards the mournful in music, and that such a mind actually obtains more pleasure from a dirge or chant in the minor key than from any joyful march or roundelay.

But music may bear the imprint of both the Orient and Occident at the same time ; and such is to be found among the peoples of European countries bordering on Asia. As an instance I may quote the regions of the Caucasus Mountains, from which many Russian officers came whom I met as prisoners in Turkey. These Southern Russians were Europeans in name ; but many of them were markedly Asiatic in character, and their music showed it. As musicians in their own peculiar style, they were unique ; and they had reached such a pitch of excellence in part-songs that I doubt if their performance could be bettered in any other land. Some of their songs were distinctly European in style, others were just as clearly of Asiatic origin, and others again were a blend of the music of both continents. These Russians took the greatest delight in their songs, and sang always in perfect harmony. They seemed to consider the singing almost as a sacred rite, so grave and intent were they during a performance. But their methods of voice-production and control, their tricks of style, and the very *timbre* of their voices, were not purely

European, and would not have suited most English songs ; yet they were perfect for the type of music which the Russians affected. I remember hearing them attempt ' God Save the King ' when they wished to please some British guests. The doleful result still lives in my memory, for their Russianised version was utterly unlike our National Anthem, though full of harmony.

The Russian officers at Afium Karahissar used to assemble, twenty or more strong, on a Sunday afternoon at a spot outside the camp where the bare hillside gave room for their audience, and there they would sit around their leader and entertain us with songs of their country and others of their own composition. I feel that I must describe some of this music, as it was strange to our ears, but at the same time very alluring. There was a song in the minor key of which the refrain ran thus :

## RUSSIAN LAMENT



It was sung in very slow time, and, though we could not understand the words, its cadences were so unutterably sad that words could not have added much to their message of despair. Yet, mournful though it was, the beautiful harmony of the tenor, baritone, and bass voices which rendered it made an impression on some of us which we are not likely to forget. I believe the song was a lament for the fate of Russia and her captive sons in many foreign lands. There were at least seven different parts for the voices—altos, first and second tenors, first and second baritones, and first and second basses—and rarely did we hear the least discord or a false note. Every man knew his part and sang it usually without a written score, guided only by memory and ear, and by the small movements of the conductor's hands.

A curious song was the following :

ORIENTAL RUSSIAN SONG



This is a good example of Western music with a strong admixture of Eastern melody. The unusual staccato notes in its latter bars resemble

those of the Turkish songs of Yozgad ; and again the melody is mostly in the minor key, though not exactly sad in nature.

Yet another Russian song is worth recording :

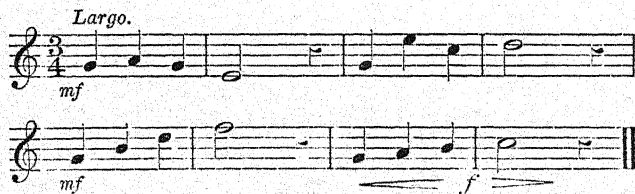
RUSSIAN CHANT



This is in the major key, but nevertheless expresses the most profound melancholy, though beautiful in its sad melodies. It was the favourite of all the Russian songs among the prisoners at Afium Karahissar, and the air is one which haunts the memory. The time is very slow, and in the third bar of each stanza a prolonged pause is made on the C which adds greatly to the general effect.

The last example of Southern Russian music which I wish to record is supposed to represent the song of a chorister in a cathedral.

'THE BELL'



Again the time is very slow—almost funereal, in fact. A male alto sang the refrain, while the remainder of the choir accompanied him in

six separate parts which, grouped together, gave the effect of the tolling of a gigantic bell. Each man repeated the word 'Boom' on the note allotted to his part to form the necessary chord, the sound being allowed to die away as the reverberations of a great bell would fade after each stroke. The 'bell' tolled three times to a bar, slowly and ponderously, and thus supported the notes of the soloist. So wonderful was the musical effect that, with eyes closed, it was easy to imagine that one was in a lofty cathedral where the pure notes of the alto voice were ringing and dying in the vaulted roof, and echoing in the dark cloisters and chapels. This song was also a great favourite with every audience, and well deserved its popularity, for it was at once simple and beautiful.

Among the songs which the Russians sang was one in which a couple of words recurred continually. They were Russian words of course ; but, curiously enough, they were also English words which I dare not write as they are unsuitable for print, though very funny. Let us say the words were 'tickly toes.' These bear some likeness to the actual ones. The song was a tragic one, or so I gathered from the faces of the singers, and the words 'tickly toes' were sung repeatedly, with gravity, nay almost with *reverence*, by the whole choir. It was highly amusing to watch the face of any Briton who heard the song for the first time in a room crowded with Russians on a cold winter after-

noon. When the words first reached his ears he sat up and stared at the singers, uncertain if he had heard aright ; when they were repeated he smiled, then pulled himself together to avoid giving offence to his enraptured hosts ; but when they recurred time after time they got on his nerves, his face suffused to a brick-red, he pushed his handkerchief into his mouth, and finally staggered from the room. Arrived on the landing, he made any silly joke which he could remember, and then laughed and laughed, apparently at his own wit, till the tears rolled down his face, and the Russians around him, amazed at his hilarity, clamoured eagerly for a translation of the jest. Some old joke, *any* old joke, had to be rendered at once in French, generally one which was extremely silly, and the Russians were more amazed than ever at the extraordinary raptures of the mad English and their sense of the ludicrous, for they never gathered that their own ' tickly toes ' was the cause of the mirth.

But vocal music, and nothing but vocal music, is apt to pall after a time, and the ear longs for the gentle and wordless appeal of instrumental melody ; and thus it came about that, after several months at Yozgad, the idea struck me that the camp might be enlivened by an orchestra, however humble. I had a small violin, bought in the local bazaar for the equivalent of ten shillings and made of deal, and that was the only instrument in our camp of nearly one hundred

officers. On it I acted as 'organist' for the church services held every Sunday in a room in one of the lower houses, and also accompanied all performers when the camp had a 'sing-song'; but its squeaky notes were feeble, and they merely helped to keep the singers in the right path when their voices tended to stray. None of us in Yozgad had heard English music for nearly three years, though many were very musical without being actual performers, so I thought that, if an orchestra could be formed which could play well-known music, it would be very welcome; and as no one else was willing to attempt the job, it seemed that I myself would have to form that orchestra, train it, and provide it with music.

The arrival of Lieutenant-Commander H. G. Stoker, R.N., from Constantinople with a guitar decided me to make the attempt, so I settled down to consider the prospects of even moderate success. They were not too rosy:

*Item 1.* I knew nothing of the theory of music, or orchestration.

*Item 2.* No printed music could be bought in Yozgad, nor would the Turks allow any to reach us from England, for they said that it might be used to convey news.

*Item 3.*—There were no instruments except my small fiddle and Stoker's guitar.

*Item 4.* There was only one other violinist, as far as could be ascertained—Major E. E. Forbes.

However, difficulties exist to be overcome, and it seemed that an attempt could do no harm



and would help to pass the long hours, so, in fear and trepidation, I started on the career of a leader of an orchestra.

Careful enquiry unearthed another violinist, though a modest performer at that—one Private Turner, an orderly—who told me that the village cobbler had taught him to fiddle when he was a lad. He added that he would like to join the orchestra if another violin could be found, but warned me that he could not play a chord or a run, and could never manage a D sharp on the D string! Well and good! Turner would do as a third violin provided that chords, runs, and D sharps were taboo in his part. Satisfactory, though rather complicated.

Forbes, a better violinist and musician than myself, also had no violin, and he said that nothing would induce him to play first fiddle, though he would be delighted to assist as a second. Good! Here was a capable supporter, if a violin could be raised by hook or crook. I approached Stoker, the proud owner of the only guitar, with a humble request for his help.

"Right oh! old man," said he. "It would be top-hole! But I can't play the bally guitar unless it is strung as I have it now—as a banjo. You see, I don't play the guitar, though I can strum with anyone on a jolly old banjo, and will knock you up an accompaniment to anything if you will whistle me the tune."

"But we must have the right harmony," I replied. "A 'vamped' accompaniment won't

do. I suppose you can read music all right, and keep time ? ”

“ My time is my own, old bird ! ” said the gallant sailor, “ but I will correct it as you like. And as for reading music, I haven’t done very much in that line ; but give me the score and I’ll work like a nigger and guarantee to deliver you the goods.”

“ Splendid ! ” answered I. “ Take the shilling. You are hereby enrolled in the Blue Anatolian Band.”

So there was my player of chords and supporter in the bass. A first-class musician, too, by nature, with a fine voice, an excellent ear, and a gift for composing tunes which caught the popular fancy. He quickly extended his repertoire of chords, and became in time the mainstay of the band.

Recruitment being finished for the moment, the problem of instruments claimed attention. Forbes managed to get a small violin in Yozgad, and I had already written to England for a violin and bow to be sent in pieces in a small parcel. To my delight, these arrived safely, and three weeks’ work by some willing helpers produced a violin and a spliced bow which were great improvements on the local specimens. Turner was then fitted out with a local instrument and the hopeful band was ready to start work. The performers were there, the instruments were there ; but alas ! the music was not, and the chief problem remained to be solved.

Original composition on an extensive scale was

out of the question. It was beyond my powers, and the camp wanted tunes which they knew, not the half-fledged and crude productions of an amateur. There seemed to be only one way out of the difficulty. Every piece of music must be written from memory. And it would not suffice to remember merely the air. The whole of the accompaniment must also be recalled before I should be justified in trying to write any piece of music. The lovers of harmony in the camp would rightly howl with rage if the wrong chords, however true, supported some well-known and cherished air. There were also other problems to be faced. Music which can be adapted to a guitar accompaniment is not very easy to find, apart from love-songs, negro melodies, and other simple airs ; but it is remarkable how well the soft notes of a guitar can sound even in some of the classics of the great composers. To be able to realise what was easy or difficult on a guitar strung as a banjo, I was obliged to learn that peculiar instrument, and this I proceeded to do without delay. My willing Stoker could not cope with runs, therefore all runs had to be delegated to Forbes, the second violin, at the same time that Turner, the third violin, was shielded from all D sharps and chords ! And finally, the initial key of any piece had to be chosen so that any other key to which it happened to change was within the powers of Stoker. These were the thorns and pitfalls which beset the path to success.

Having decided that a certain piece of music would be appreciated by my audiences, and that it was not too difficult for the orchestra, the first step was to run through the complete first violin part. If the whole came easily to memory, the next step was to see if the accompaniment could also be remembered from beginning to end, and, if any part had been forgotten, to try to bring it to mind by repeating the bars which preceded it, for this plan was often successful when my memory was at fault. I had played the violin after a fashion since I was eight years old, and I attempted to record only those airs which I knew as violin solos and to whose accompaniments I had listened many times. If I was confident as to the harmony, the next step was to take the guitar and hum the music from beginning to end, trying to find the proper chords on the instrument and to see if they were easy ; and also to find an initial key which would not land poor old Stoker in some hopeless key later in the piece. The lack of a proper bass was a difficulty, for the lowest note obtainable was G on the violin, and the same on the banjo-guitar. When I had selected the best initial key, I wrote the whole of the first violin part in a school copy-book in in which I had already ruled the necessary lines, and then reverted to the guitar and wrote its accompaniment in another such book, having already in mind the part which the second violin would take in the general harmony. There followed the writing of the second violin part in

another book, giving him any running accompaniments ; and finally the third violin part in yet another volume, studiously avoiding D sharps and chords. And so another selection was added to the repertoire.

At first we were content with the lightest sort of music. I began on *The Geisha*, and completed two long selections from that opera, each of which took more than ten minutes to play. These met with such approval from the camp that I set to work on more ambitious music, and spent two or three hours every day in orchestration, seizing every opportunity to strum chords on the guitar when my long-suffering room-companions, Stace and Carlisle, were absent. It is remarkable how the musical memory revives and improves with continual use. I often found that I could remember only certain parts of some pieces, or that some bars of the accompaniments had been forgotten ; yet after humming the remainder repeatedly, and sometimes thinking of it at intervals for several days, the missing parts would flash into my mind at some unexpected moment and were jotted down at once on any bit of paper that I could find. Gradually, as the months rolled on, piece after piece was finished, and the orchestra expanded to five violins, two guitars, and a flute. We started regular fortnightly concerts, and there was a waiting list of applicants for admission as third violins on the chance of a vacancy. In addition to a band practice every morning, I had a class of three

beginners on the violin who plodded laboriously through their scales and exercises for an hour daily in an empty room.

News of the orchestra reached Constantinople, and the Dutch Embassy generously presented us with two more violins, another guitar, and a flute. At Kastamuni, and afterwards at Geddos, the restrictions on prisoners were not nearly so severe as at Yozgad and Afium Karahissar; and the officers in those places were able to get music from England, and made all kinds of musical instruments in their camp workshops. There were many very expert carpenters among them, and a sprinkling of good musicians who formed the nucleus of quite a large orchestra equipped with drums, violoncellos, double-basses, and banjos, as well as violins. I saw one of the violoncellos made at Kastamuni. It was really a marvellous piece of amateur carpentry. Resting against the wall, at a distance of fifteen feet, it would have passed anywhere as the work of a professional, for its shape and colour were almost perfect, and even its tone was passably good. My small orchestra, which started its career at Yozgad and moved later to Afium Karahissar, never attained the size of the Kastamuni rival; but it was much appreciated and served its purpose. Unfortunately Yozgad was reserved, more or less, as a camp for the 'die-hards' and suspected escapers among the officer-prisoners—in fact, it was a 'strafe' camp, and its rules were unusually severe at

first. It was the misfortune of my orchestra to be born in such a spot.

It may interest some readers to know that, when the war against Turkey ended in October 1918, the Yozgad orchestra, then at Afun Karahissar, had a repertoire of 44 selections, all written in school copybooks in the space of two years. I think that the most difficult pieces to write were three of Mendelssohn's *Songs Without Words*; but selections from *Il Trovatore*, *Rigoletto*, *Carmen*, *The Mikado*, and *H.M.S. Pinafore* were almost as difficult, and gave me many an hour of anxiety and thought. Among our ambitious productions were Edward German's *Shepherd's Dance* of the Henry VIII Suite, and his *Country, Pastoral*, and *Merry-makers' Dances* of the Nell Gwynn Suite; also one of Moszkowski's *Spanish Dances*, Beethoven's *Abschied vom Clavier*, Rubenstein's *Melodie*, Schubert's *Serenade* and his *Moment Musical*, Schumann's *Schlummerlied*, Hauser's *Schifferlied*, Gounod's *Serenade*, Mlynarski's *Mazur*, and the well-known *Humoreske* by Dvorák.

Lighter music was represented by selections of English and Scotch airs, several waltzes, Harry Lauder's songs, popular American and Italian songs, and by a collection of old favourites which I called 'Bygone Days.' In this last selection no song was included which was not at least twenty-five years old. It was welcomed with delight by certain elderly colonels, to whom such tunes as 'Two Lovely Black Eyes,' 'Pop

Goes the Weasel,' 'Killaloo,' 'Mrs. 'Enry 'Awkins,' and 'Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road,' recalled happy memories of times long past. To us of the Yozgad orchestra, the most pleasant recollection of our labours is the whole-hearted appreciation, by indulgent audiences, of our efforts to enliven some rather dull afternoons and evenings. 'We felt that our work had many faults, and thought seriously of putting up a placard inscribed 'Don't shoot! We are doing our best!' But fate was kind, and never a rotten egg or a dead cat arrived to disturb our harmony; and, with the armistice of 1918, the orchestra made its last bow to the audience and was scattered to the ends of the earth.

In 1917 the Yozgad camp had an excellent choir, trained by P. N. Edmonds, of the Gunners. Edmonds, who had the advantage of professional experience as a musician, composed several pieces while in Turkey and wrote others from memory. His powers of orchestration, with no musical instrument on which to play what he wrote, were always a marvel to me, untrained as I was in the mysteries of theory. Sitting down at a small table, he would work at a complete oratorio, with parts for two or three voices and a multitude of instruments, as if he was writing a letter to a friend.

"But how do you know what it will *sound* like?" I humbly enquired. "You don't even hum the music you are writing."

"Oh, I don't know!" he replied. "There's nothing wonderful about it. Anyone with



musical training can easily write correct harmony, though it may not be good music."

So I retired to my room in a chastened frame of mind, marvelling at his ability and deploring my own ignorance ; and, humbly getting out the old guitar once more, plodded on through the endless series of chords which were destined to become the bane of Stoker's life.

It was in October 1916 that the thought struck Holyoake, of the Yeomanry, that a pantomime would add a festive touch to our first Christmas in Turkey, and he sat down at once to rack his brains for ideas. There were so many Turks about the camp, and they lent themselves so well to ridicule and jest, that it was natural that they should figure in the leading parts for our amusement and edification. But there was danger that the victims of our humour might come to hear of the pantomime, and that that catastrophe would bring dire retribution on the camp, for no Turkish official could forgive such an insult to his most prized possession—his dignity. The strictest secrecy, therefore, had to be maintained, both as to the characters in the pantomime and the probable date of the performance. The finished production bore the alluring title of *The Fair Maiden of Yozgad!* It dealt in no flattering manner with the real and supposed failings of Commandant Kiazim Bey, Sambo his satellite, and Moise the 'Pimple'; and described the love-affairs of a beauteous damsel, Saba by name, for whose hand the Pimple was a

sutor, though she inclined more towards a certain Captain Vere de Vere, a British prisoner. Kiazim Bey, Sambo, and the Pimple were all caricatured most effectively—so well, in fact, that if any of them had seen the performance there would have been an end of such amusements, and solitary confinement for the actors. As this pantomime was probably the first ever staged in Central Anatolia, I feel that I may devote some space to it.

The performance was to take place shortly before Christmas, and the only theatre was a landing in our house. On the selected night, at nine o'clock, everything was apparently normal. In some rooms officers were playing bridge; in others they were reading or talking; and in others unmistakable snores seemed to show that the day's work was indeed ended. Hassan Effendi and the chaoush made their usual round and counted their captives, then wished them good night and vanished, and for a time all was silence. Then the sleepers awoke, cards were thrust away, books were discarded, and the house hummed with excitement. The old sentries without were mildly alarmed; but they were soon reassured, and, regaining their usual *sang-froid*, dozed fitfully unless roused by a particularly vociferous burst of applause. The stage was set, the candle footlights lit, the audience assembled, the actors dressed; and at ten o'clock the fun began with an 'overture' by 'Don Sandeso's Famous Orchestra' (myself

alone), packed away in an obscure corner, with willing hands to hold the music.

I cannot give more than a couple of extracts from this pantomime, which was performed under such unique circumstances. But a speech by Mustad Pasha, the pantomime commandant, adorned with huge epaulettes of yellow tinder, sticks in my memory, as it caricatured the sort of war news with which the Turks were wont to regale us.

*Enter MUSTAD PASHA. Addresses a Turkish crowd.*

COMMANDANT MUSTAD. Good citizens, to you some news I bring.

When I have done, our soldiers' praise you'll sing.  
In France the Germans have advanced ten miles,  
O'er barbed wire, trenches, mines, and even *stiles*. (*Cheers.*)

Their losses are one officer, ten men,  
Who will be ready soon to fight again.  
The English lost a *million* men or more. (*Cheers.*)  
They cry for peace, and try to end the war.

Our troops have broken the Canal's defences ;  
Egypt they'll sack, regardless of expenses.  
An Austrian plane dropped bombs on Mount Vesuvius ;  
The papers say this caused an awful fuss !

The British fleet (Praise God !) has been destroyed. (*Loud cheers.*)

Which made the English very much annoyed.  
The Zepps have bombed, in England, twenty towns ;  
Damage to date is fifty million pounds. (*Loud cheers.*)

That's all the news. I'm sure you will agree  
It's just about as good as it can be.  
Peace will come soon ; and, with the Huns our friends,  
We'll rule the mighty world until it ends.

*(Exit, followed by cheering crowd.)*

There was also a particularly catchy song by Dorling, dressed as the Pimple, set to a well-known air from *Miss Hook of Holland*.

SCENE.—*The market place at Yozgad, where chorus of Turkish maidens is singing a refrain of which the words are 'Ekmek, yoke yoke, soojek soo' (literally 'Bread! No! No! Hot water!')*

*Enter SABA, who talks with maidens. Then enter PIMPLE.*

SABA. Why, here comes that outrageous little beast  
Who tried to flirt with me at Dad's last feast.

PIMPLE. Good morning, Saba. (*Aside*) What a little dear!  
She doesn't love me very much, I fear.  
*Nobody* loves me. What have I done wrong?  
Well, never mind! I'll sing a little song.

(*Sings, to the air of 'I've a little pink pettie,' etc.*)

I'm the Interpreter man,  
And I always do all that I can  
To obey Colonel Chitty's behests,  
And to treat 'em as guests.  
But *they* don't appreciate me,  
For my efforts they don't care a D,  
Since they call me a mean little crimp,  
Yes, and christen me 'Shrimp.'  
Yet still, I don't care a blow,  
For I fit myself out from their parcels, and so—

I've a suit of grey flannels from Battey,  
I've a vest that I *borrowed* from Spink,  
While my tie and my collar  
Cost Winnie a dollar;  
He bought them for Holland Park rink.  
One boot came from kind Major Baylay,  
And one from the Embassy stores;  
While to top up the lot  
You will see that I've got  
On a pair of friend Staggers's drawers.

Mine is a wearisome job,  
For Stamboul never pays me a bob ;  
And therefore I make what I can  
From the mad Englishman.  
I gather occasional dibs  
Doing shopping and telling 'em fibs ;  
But Ali comes round for a share,  
So I don't get much there.  
And even the food that I eat  
Comes each day from the Commandant's house up the street—

I've a tin of tea tablets from Tudway,  
Worcester sauce goes to flavour my stews ;  
While Dinwiddy's collections  
Afford choice refectations  
I find it dashed hard to refuse.  
Once the Doc got what seemed to be sugar—  
And a sweet tooth is one of my faults—  
But I didn't take long  
To find out I was wrong ;  
It was highly condensed *Epsom salts*.

Poor Pimple ! The song reminds me that Moise himself once suffered a like fate when the spook predicted tribulation for him on the morning after a certain *séance*, and the prediction came true because some tablets of calomel had been slipped into the Pimple's coffee overnight.

On the morning after the pantomime some of us met the Pimple in the lane below our house. He seemed rather excited and burst out, " There was much noise in the upper house last night. What was happening ? The commandant is annoyed."

" It was only another *rehearsal* of the pantomime," we assured him.

" Ah! The *fantasia*! I wish to view it. What is its subject? "

" Oh! just the usual sort of rot, you know. No doubt you, as a Parisian, have seen many of them."

" *Oui! oui! Sans doute!* But when is the final performance? The Commandant is desirous to view it."

" We are very sorry, Mr. Moise," we said, " but we must tell you the unfortunate truth of this business. We had another rehearsal last night, as we have already said. This time it was a *dress* rehearsal. You understand? A rehearsal *in costume*. But the acting was so bad that, in spite of all our trouble, we have decided to drop the pantomime, so you will never be able to see it."

" A thousand pities! " ejaculated poor Moise. " I was hoping for much pleasure. Alas! you English are too easily discouraged. You will perform another, is it not so? "

" Perhaps," said I, and smiled.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FALL OF TURKEY

With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,  
Confusion worse confounded.

MILTON.

HISTORY teaches that the life of a nation resembles that of man. Born in tribulation, but animated by a spirit which comes from the unknown ; helpless in his earliest days and at the mercy of countless foes, but increasing in strength, stature, and the power of defence and offence if he survives the dangers of youth, man attains at last to maturity and comes to the fullness of power. But soon after he has reached his prime, his body begins to age, though his mind may strive desperately towards a higher summit. The limbs which have marched so stoutly against the foe, crave more often for rest and ease. The mind becomes impatient of the restrictions of the body ; it still leaps to great ideas, to grand conquests, but the body is incapable of carrying them into effect. The ' Government ' seethes with ambition, though the ' People ' are falling into decay. It is the beginning of the end, The mind learns, at last, the lesson that the body is trying to inculcate, bitter though it be. One by one the

attainments of youth are relinquished ; infirmities—lightly vanquished in youth—obtain the upper hand ; and so the body sinks to impotence, and too often drags the mind in its train. Yet, though this is the mournful course of nature, the final and common lot of man, a semblance of this decay may appear in a serious illness curable by a physician if a remedy is found. Agonising though that illness may be, and drastic the remedy, the crumbling body may arise, rejuvenated at least for a time, and rid of the virus which was destroying it—a brand plucked from the burning. The history of the world is full of instances of the advance of nations to power and their subsequent decay. The Egyptian, Assyrian, Greek, Carthaginian, Roman, and perhaps German Empires are all examples of this process. Should Turkey be added to the list ? Or is she merely passing through a period of sickness ? Time alone will show if recovery is possible.

The history of Turkey has been one of perpetual war since Othman laid the foundations of the Ottoman Empire in Asia Minor in the thirteenth century. Orkhan, Murad I, and Bayazid I, successive Sultans of Turkey, extended the empire into Bulgaria in the fourteenth century ; and in the next hundred years Murad II conquered Macedonia and parts of Greece, and his son Mohammed II seized Constantinople to form the capital of the expanding empire. By 1516, Selim, the grandson of Mohammed, had



conquered Syria, Mesopotamia, Kurdistan, and Armenia, and had occupied Egypt. But it was under Solyman the Magnificent that the Turkish Empire reached its zenith. He captured Hungary in 1526, annexed Tripoli in 1551, and swept the Mediterranean with his fleets. The empire then extended from Algiers in the west to the Persian Gulf in the east ; from Vienna in the north to Aden in the south. A marvellous achievement for so small a nation in less than four centuries. The Turk was the terror of the Orient. By energy, fortitude, and desperate courage, urged on by his love of plunder rather than religious zeal, he had gained for himself a leading place among the nations. He ravaged with fire and sword ; he was merciless in victory ; he was stubborn in defeat, though defeat was rare ; he was stern, virile, hardy, a man among men, a born warrior who died in harness. Turkey was as a strong man rejoicing in his strength. And then came the process of decay.

A succession of weak rulers hampered the progressive policy of the nation. Political corruption and indolence, the exhaustion of man-power and the resulting deterioration in the people, turned the tide of victory to defeat, and with the disastrous naval battle of Lepanto in 1571 the decline of Turkey began. Bosnia, Moldavia, Wallachia, Hungary, the Ukraine, the Morea, and part of Serbia, were lost in the next three centuries in wars against Austria, Persia, and Russia ; and the Russians destroyed

the Turkish fleet in 1770. Early in the nineteenth century Greece threw off the Turkish yoke, and Russia seized the Caucasus region. In 1878, as the outcome of yet another war against Russia, Turkey lost Roumania, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and the remainder of Serbia, and five years later the British occupied Egypt. Again at war in 1911, this time against Italy, Turkey lost Tripoli and Cyrenaica ; and the following year, after the Balkan wars, only Constantinople itself and the small province of Adrianople remained to her in Europe out of the vast tracts which she had once possessed. So in three and a half centuries, the Turks lost almost all the territory which they had won at the cost of much blood, and their country entered the Great War as a third-class power, a mere vassal of Germany. Thus were the mighty fallen ; but they were destined to fall still further ere they reached the bottom of the pit which German hands prepared.

During the Great War the state of Turkey went from bad to worse ; and when she collapsed in October 1918, she had hardly 200,000 men under arms as compared with the million with which she entered the fight, and her casualties had reached a total of nearly one million men. But hundreds of thousands of her young men had been called to the colours during the struggle. How, then, can the shrinkage of the Ottoman army to such meagre proportions be explained ? The answer to this question is to be found partly

in the gigantic list of desertions from the army, especially during the later stages of the war. Incredible though it may appear, the Turkish War Office admitted in 1918 that there were 300,000 Turkish deserters roaming the mountains of Anatolia. These men allied themselves to the numerous bands of brigands already preying upon the country, and together they formed an outlaw population not far short of 1,000,000 men. For the most part the brigands were scattered over the country in small bands, each with its own area, so that the men could exist by levying toll upon the towns and villages in their area ; but at times they formed themselves into large bodies which struck terror into the local officials, and even perturbed the authorities at Stamboul. Their strength once led them to threaten to sack Constantinople, and they actually held up the town of Panderma. It was unsafe to travel from town to town, or even from village to village, without an armed escort.

I remember one occasion, late in 1917, during a journey by road from Yozgad to Angora. We were a party of twenty British officers, travelling in carts through 120 miles of mountainous country. The Turkish escort consisted of two officers and twenty soldiers, well armed and on the alert. Even with a guard of that strength an attack by brigands was expected while we were traversing a desolate area near the Kyzyl River, so the caravan closed up, advanced and

flank guards were thrown out, and halts were made at intervals for reconnaissance. If we bivouacked for the night, a ring of sentries was placed around us—not with the idea of preventing escape, for many were not capable of such an effort in that wilderness—but to guard against surprise by a band of cut-throats which was believed to be dogging our footsteps. A solitary traveller, however well armed, would not have stood a dog's chance.

The brigands were of many different types. There were deserters from the Ottoman army, strong and hardy soldiers in the prime of life, or raw recruits who had escaped immediately after conscription, as I shall presently relate. These men varied much in character. Some were cowards who could not face the prospect of actual fighting, or whose spirit had been broken by their experience of war ; others were fugitives from military justice ; and others, again, were so drawn by ties of family and anxiety for the fate of their relations that they preferred the life of an outlaw near their homes to the uncertainty of awaiting news in distant Mesopotamia or Palestine. For the most part these soldiers were friendly to the British—especially those from the battle-fronts—but they were rough, cruel, and indifferent to fate. Others among the brigands were Armenians who had fled into outlawry to save themselves from massacre by the Turks. These also, though avaricious and unreliable, were friendly to the British, and, with the

memory of the torture and massacre of their families ever before them, were willing to torture and kill any Turk whom they could capture. Naturally enough, there was no love lost between them and the Turkish brigands, though both were at war with the Ottoman Government.

Again, there were the political brigands. These were mostly Turks who had come under suspicion or had actually been denounced by some official spy ; many of them educated men, unfitted for the rigours of an outlaw's life. Their attitude towards the British was uncertain, for they might be prepared to buy the favour of their Government by the betrayal of an escaping Briton. And lastly, there was the frankly avaricious cut-throat of melodrama. Of any nationality, of any age, he was out for plunder and nothing else. Woe betide the penniless traveller who fell into his hands ! Probably he was a murderer ; certainly a thief. If he captured a traveller who could not at once produce a good round sum of money, or was not worth an early ransom, a knife or bullet settled the captive's fate, and the brigand perhaps acquired a better pair of boots than his own.

With Turkey full of these outlaw bands, the fate of a British prisoner escaping towards the coast was a matter of chance. One thing was certain. No escaping prisoner could hope to reach any point on the coast without falling into the hands of brigands of one sort or another, and his fate then depended on the class of brigand

and possibly the length of his purse. On the whole, the brigands were an obstacle to escape—a far greater obstacle than the Government troops and police. It will be remembered, however, that in 1917 four British officers escaped from Kastamuni and gained the southern coast of the Black Sea. Three of them were exceedingly lucky, for, after being recaptured by Turkish gendarmes when trying to secure a boat, they were rescued by brigands, who attacked and defeated their captors. These brigands were so friendly that they fed and guided the Englishmen, and finally went *with them* across the Black Sea to Russia in a sailing-boat. On the other hand, Commander Cochrane's party, escaping in 1918 towards the Mediterranean, met only brigands of the cut-throat or deserter type, who had to be bribed in every case and were quite ready to betray the fugitives if cash was not paid down on the spot. I have known men who were trying to escape to be forced to give themselves up to the nearest Turkish officials for protection against brigands who threatened to murder them.

Through misfortune or treachery, or perhaps the omission to pay a monthly bribe to the local gendarmes, a brigand was sometimes captured by the authorities, who then proceeded to deal with him in true medieval fashion. He was dragged into the town and through the streets, his wrists tied tightly behind him with a thong, the end of which was attached to the saddle of a

mounted gendarme, beaten if his footsteps lagged, and spat upon by the scum of the populace. Arrived in the market-square, where the windows were crowded with spectators, his crimes were read to the people and his doom pronounced. Three poles were then lashed together at the tips, and this apex, to which a short rope was attached, was raised a few feet in the air. A noose at the other end of the short rope was adjusted round the neck of the wretched victim. With a heave the foot of the third pole was then pushed inwards towards the other two, raising the apex of the tripod and swinging the doomed man into the air. There he died the horrible death of slow throttling, amid the cheers and laughter of a despicable crowd.

It was customary to place a placard above the corpse detailing the crimes of the deceased, so that all who could read should be deterred from like misdeeds, and the body was left hanging for several days in the market-square, while children laughed and played around it and men and women bought and sold in its shadow. Three such corpses swayed in the breeze in the market-square when our orderlies went one day to make purchases for the camp at Yozgad. If such public outrages on the decencies of life and the dignity of death are allowed in Turkey, can it be maintained that this is a country fit for a place in the councils of Europe? Perhaps the Mussolini of Asia Minor, Mustapha Kemal Pasha, has suppressed these barbarities since the Great

War, but there is still a veil over the doings in the interior.

Towards the end of the war the country was in desperate straits for men. Boys of fifteen were being called to the colours. It was in October 1917 that I found myself in a train bound for Eskichehr from Angora, to which were attached three carriages full of conscripts. There were pitiful scenes of farewell on the platforms of small wayside stations, where peasant mothers were parting from their children, who were destined, like their fathers, to become cannon-fodder or hunted outlaws in the wilds. The train rumbled on, and twilight descended while we were still far out on the arid plain. At either end of each conscript carriage stood a gendarme with rifle loaded and at the ready, and I wondered at such unusual precautions. But the reason was soon apparent. The train slowed down in climbing a slope and immediately three figures dropped from the carriage windows and dashed blindly through the mist towards the open country. Up went the gendarmes' rifles, and they opened a rapid fire on the fugitives. One conscript fell with a cry, but the other two vanished in the gloom, running in zigzags till they disappeared, the better to escape the bullets aimed at them. The train stopped, the dying boy was brought in and on we went again ; but two more brigands had already joined Turkey's outlaw bands. Several times this happened, and I was told that during the night more than twenty conscripts



escaped. Thus was the brigand population of the land increased from day to day. Better a life of hardship and exposure than certain death in the trenches of Palestine or Mesopotamia, fighting for Germany who was ruining their country.

It was during this same railway journey, on the way to Afium Karahissar, that we had an unpleasant experience. Now, the Turk is a Mahomedan, and, as such, is not supposed to touch any intoxicating liquor. But actually he is by no means a teetotaler, and, in fact, has no love at all for Mr. 'Pussyfoot' Johnson, for, though prohibition was decreed in his land when the Angora Government assumed control, it has recently been abolished. A glass of *raki*, he finds, cheers his soul and induces a brighter outlook on a life replete with worry; and if he restricts himself to one glass, no great harm is done. The effect of *raki*—a colourless spirit distilled from raisins—is peculiar. For a time it seems powerless to elate; and then, suddenly, it sweeps away self-control, reason and even consciousness, especially in the novice. Its after-effects are not dangerous, but there must be something peculiarly potent in it to produce the result which I have described. However, in the night journey to Afium Karahissar it was not a solitary glass of *raki* which overwhelmed the Turks, but a prolonged soaking with that insidious spirit, as I shall relate.

The train reached Eskichehr, and we clamoured to be allowed to go into the town to get tea at a

small restaurant. The request met with the approval of Hassan Effendi, who was in charge of the party, and off we trooped and paid ten shillings each for a few cups of tea and a couple of small cakes apiece. As we entered the railway station again, half an hour later, we saw, to our horror, that the train was leaving the platform and rapidly gathering speed, carrying with it everything we possessed except the clothes we wore. Now, it was then the end of October, when the nights in Turkey are as cold as those in England, and we were wearing only thin khaki drill uniform. Even our overcoats had left for Afium Karahissar, 100 miles away, and already we shivered in the chill air of evening. Hassan, and 'George' the chaoush, were beside themselves with excitement. They dashed hither and thither, wrung their hands, stormed, raged, and cursed the station-master, who cursed them in return and maintained that if his train was ready to start before the scheduled time there was no reason why he should not send it off, for it would get all the sooner to Afium. Telegrams were despatched down the line to stop the train, to drop our carriage, anything and everything; but, the country being Turkey, nothing resulted, and our kit continued its journey to Afium.

A goods train being due to start at 9 p.m., we were bundled into an empty wagon attached to it, and set off on a six hours' night-journey southwards. The cold ate steadily into our bones as

the night-air whistled through the crevices in the steel doors and walls, and it was not till Stoker hit upon the bright idea of a 'sing-song and scrum' that some warmth returned to our chilled bodies. This performance may best be described as sitting with others on the floor, huddled together like monkeys at the Zoo, and singing lustily. It was most effectual, and we kept it up far into the night. In the centre of the scrum the warmth was splendid, though the pressure was almost painful, but everyone had to take his turn on the outside and suffered accordingly.

Now, Hassan Effendi and his 'George' were in a grievous state of mind, anticipating dire penalties at Afiun because they had missed the train; so, after bemoaning their fate for some time, they betook themselves to the consolation of *raki*, of which they had a liberal supply. The poison soon had its effect, and, passing through various stages of hilarity, Hassan sank at last into a stupor, and lay full-length on the swaying floor, oblivious to the world and his own anxiety. But 'George' became dangerous. The liquor changed him from a genial savage to a quarrelsome sot. Staggering from the wagon at a wayside station, he collected a few twigs, and when the train had started once more and the doors were shut, he proceeded to light a fire on the wooden floor to warm his hands. Violent protests arose from the scrum of British officers. The train was not due to stop for another hour;

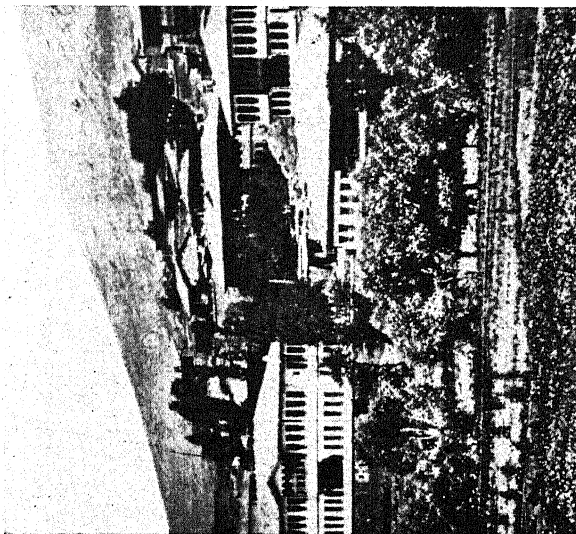
there were no means of attracting the attention of the guard ; and we were shut into the wagon like rats in a trap. But whether the carriage caught fire or not, the chaoush was determined to have his way, and no appeal was possible to the drunken and unconscious Hassan. ' George ' backed into a corner with a nasty scowl, drawing his loaded revolver and playfully pointing it this way and that, finger on trigger and prepared to murder. Only by the exercise of much tact could he be reassured and persuaded to do without his fire ; but a few more doses of *raki* happily changed his mood and he too sank into a stupor while we extinguished the embers.

It was three o'clock on a bitterly cold morning that we rattled and jolted into Afium Karahissar. Hassan, indeed, still only semi-conscious, denied that we had reached our destination and ordered us to stay in the wagon ; but we took no notice of his protests, got out, and carried him out with us. Thus did we make our debut at the new camp, carrying our jailer with us.

There were two camps for officer-prisoners at Afium Karahissar, one high up in the Armenian quarter of the town, and the other on the plain to the north of it beside the road to the railway-station. Though called ' camps,' they were really groups of empty houses allotted for the occupation of prisoners. The Upper Camp extended the greater part of the length of a dingy street, running along a steep hillside on the southern outskirts of the town, which in winter

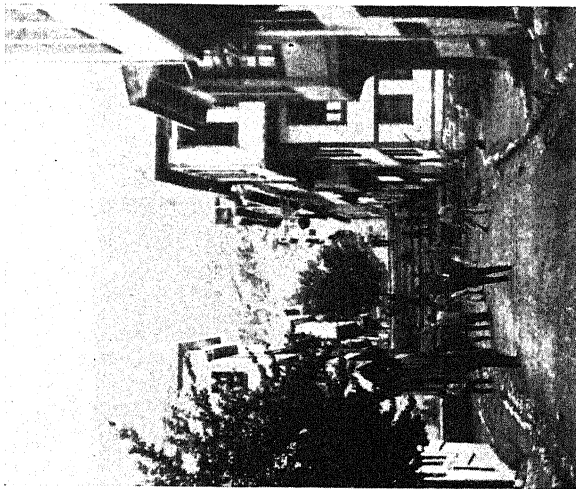
was rarely blessed with a ray of sunshine to melt the ice and snow. There was also a 'camp' for rank-and-file prisoners in an empty Armenian church close under the gigantic pinnacle of black rock which overshadows the town and is surmounted by an old Byzantine castle of Acroënus.

British, French, and Russians were congregated in these camps, but it is of the Russian officers in particular that I propose to write, as they were peculiar in many ways. These Russians came mostly from the eastern and southern provinces, and many had been captured in the snows of the Caucasus Range not far from their homes. Some were ships' officers whose vessels had been seized by Turkey even before she declared war, and who were condemned thus to spend four years in the hands of their hereditary foes. There were, however, a few officers from the northern and western parts of Russia, and amongst them a gallant little fellow, a captain in the Guards, whom I will call 'Count Ivanoff,' though that was not his real name. Many of the Russians were loyal to the old Czarist régime. Others inclined to the revolutionaries, and some were out-and-out Bolsheviks. Among the secretly Bolshevik officers was a Russian Jew—I shall call him 'Mosenstein'—who lived next door to me; a dirty and unkempt fellow, wearing a greasy overcoat or an old dressing-gown, who kept aloof from the others. This man aroused my curiosity, for he was in favour with

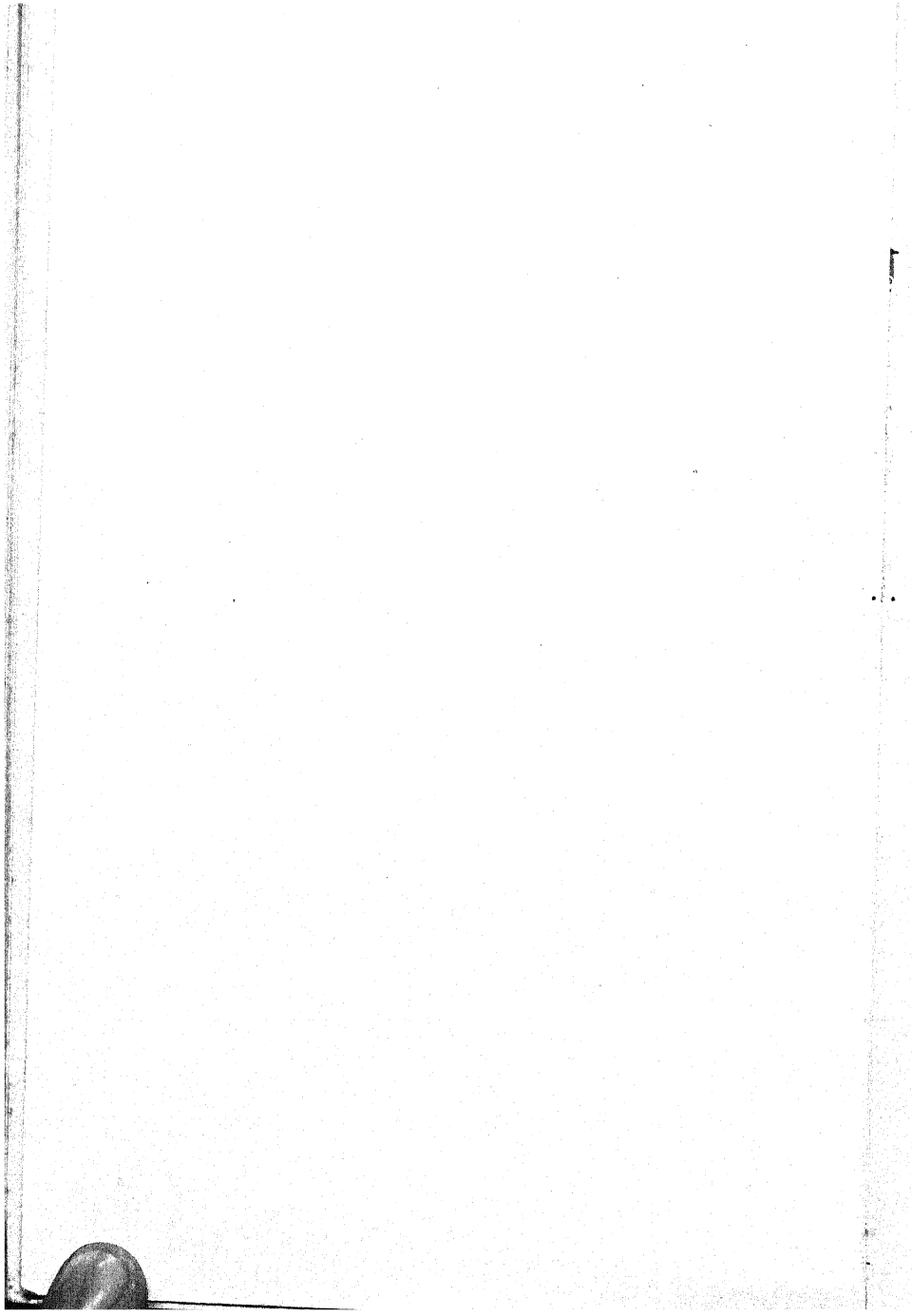


YOZGAD.

Taken secretly with a camera made by the prisoners.



UPPER CAMP AT AFTUN KARAHISSAR.  
Showing British, Russians, and Turks.



the Turks, though shunned by most of his fellows, and he seemed to be at liberty to visit the town as often as he liked and without escort. Then, in the summer of 1918, he suddenly disappeared.

It was some time after his departure that I happened to see little Count Ivanoff strolling in the road and joined him in his constitutional. A captain in the Russian Guards ranked at that time as a Colonel in the Russian Army, so the Count was the senior Russian officer at Afium and was *au fait* with all that was happening.

"*Bon jour, mon Colonel.* And what is the news to-day?" I ventured in execrable French.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur,*" he replied. "You will walk with me? *Bien!* But I have little news, for I have been imprisoned in my house by that pig of a commandant."

"I am sorry," said I. "And for what reason?"

"It was the matter of the traitor Mosenstein," he answered, with glances to right and left. "You know the dog? He lived next door to you. But now he is fled, I know not where. And, alas! he has escaped his punishment, though I may yet find him."

"Tell me about it," I asked. "This seems interesting."

"Listen," said the little Colonel. "It happened thus. I had long remarked that all that we did and said came to the ears of the Turkish Commandant, and I suspected a spy. But I did not expect to find him among those who had



served the Czar. I waited. I watched. And then I saw that villain Mosenstein creeping one day into the Commandant's office, and my suspicions were confirmed. I *knew*. That very evening I summoned him to my house. 'I accuse you, Mosenstein, of being a spy and a traitor. You are in the pay of the Turks, and have reported daily to the Commandant all that transpires in the camp. Have you anything to say?' Thus did I address him, Monsieur, as he cowered before me. And he? 'You are wrong, mon Commandant,' he said, 'I am loyal,' and with that commenced to weep before me like a child. Then I said to him, 'You dog! I know too well what you have been doing. You know me: I am a soldier and a man of my word. I care little for life, for I have lost everything in the revolution—family, lands, fortune—so I am destitute. But I love Russia—the old Russia that may yet rise again to glory—and I hate a spy. Now, listen. *To-morrow morning I shall expect to hear that you are dead.* You shudder? Nevertheless, it is so. Doubtless you have a pistol; but if not, I can put my hand on one. And listen further. If I do not hear to-morrow morning that you have been found dead, I swear to you on this crucifix that I will shoot you with my own hand and accept the consequences. You understand? Go!' Thus, *mon Capitaine*, did I address that traitor, and he crawled, weeping, from my room."

"But he escaped. Is it not so?" I asked.

"Alas ! yes," he sighed. " He went at once to his friends the Turks and laid a complaint against me, and so I have been imprisoned. However, the camp is rid of his vile presence. It is said that he has accepted service with the enemy, and it may be true. But, if God wills, I may meet him after the war ; and then we shall see ! "

A firebrand, truly, was little Count Ivanoff. A man of blood and iron ; born to the sword and probably resting now in an unknown grave dug by the bloody hands of Lenin's hordes. But he was a man whom one could respect ; smart, jaunty, careless in love, desperately brave in war, bearing the scars of many a hand-to-hand fight, yet kind to those in distress and devoted to little children. A knight-errant of the Middle Ages, born in the twentieth century as a gallant gentleman of Russia.

So different was little Ivanoff from the uncouth Russians of the east and south that it was hard to realise that they were brothers in arms. I admit that I saw these men after they had spent several years in captivity and had witnessed the collapse and degradation of their country, but they did not seem fit to hold the Czar's commission. Turkey has been at war with half the world, and has many enemies. Her people are indifferent to some nations, and dislike others. But there is one nation which inspires the Turkish heart with distrust, hatred, and loathing, and that nation is the Russians. Time after time Turkey

has suffered defeat and humiliation at the hands of Russia ; and not only these, but devastation of land, dishonour of women, and massacre of children. Woe to the Russian prisoner in Ottoman hands ! A pariah dog, scouring the streets for food, was better off than many a Russian prisoner in Turkey in the days of the Great War : the one was indeed wretched, but free ; the other, equally miserable and a captive.

Most of the Russian officers at Afium Karahissar in 1918 were apathetic and resigned to their fate. Their state of mind was reflected in the mournful cadences of many of their songs, of which I have given some examples. They *existed*. They did not live. When Russia collapsed, the Turks ceased to give their Russian prisoners the meagre pay to which they were entitled, and the Russians had to live on such rations as their captors would supply and on the bounty of the other prisoners. Their clothes were in rags, and, in the camp, many walked habitually barefooted to save their shoes. As far as education and civilisation were concerned, they seemed to be much on a par with the Turks. One gigantic old greybeard was a devotee of sun-bathing, and on a sunny morning would seek a secluded spot on the hillside where we were allowed to wander, and, stripped stark naked, would lie for hours stewing in the summer heat. A casual spectator or two did not seem to worry him. Even the Turks were rather shocked at his conduct, but he felt no shame, for

he was merely a primitive man—a genial, hearty savage. The Russians received only a few loaves of black bread each day from the Turks, and these—coarse, dirty, and half-baked—were insufficient to keep body and soul together, so the British subscribed money each month to buy proper food for their comrades in misfortune, and the money was handed to the Russians to spend as they wished.

Now, the Russians lived miserable and colourless lives. We did not stipulate that all the money which we gave should be spent on food, so it happened that a considerable part of it was spent on *raki*, with which the Russians indulged in a monthly orgy. We did not blame them. For two or three days in each thirty they could forget their sorrows and hardships, even though this indulgence meant semi-starvation for weeks to follow. In the winter, wood was so expensive that they often lay for days in their blankets, as they could not light their stoves; but during these times they probably thought of the good days ahead, when, for a short space, they would have warm rooms, songs, and *raki*. When sufficient money had been saved to buy a dozen bottles of the powerful spirit and a supply of wood for the stoves, the Russians proceeded to enjoy themselves. Day and night they kept it up, till all the *raki* was gone. If a British friend was seen walking in the road outside, he was dragged in and plied with drink, and he then found himself in a rather delicate situation. If

he refused to drink glass for glass with his hosts, they were offended ; and if he tried to leave the house while still apparently sober, their sense of hospitality was outraged and they were furious. The wise guest was he who installed himself near a window which could be opened an inch or two, and who took a sip from each glass thrust upon him and emptied the remainder surreptitiously into the street ! When he had had enough he could probably act the part of a drunken man well enough to satisfy his hosts, and thus gain the street, where he could walk briskly home after quite a jolly evening. Two or three days later his recent hosts would creep forth, thin and white-faced, and start once again the dreary life which led up to another festivity. . . . A dreadful existence, some will say ; and perhaps they are right. But I would ask them one question. Is it not better that the mind should be saved from madness by a periodical relief from monotony and despair than that the body should be nourished and guarded at the expense of sanity ? Circumstances alter cases ; and the circumstances of these Russians were infinitely worse than ours. They had no proper occupation, no hope, and no money. Let us, therefore, avoid judgment, and bestow pity on those in such distress.

The Turkish Commandant at Afium Karahissar early in 1918, one Bimbashi Muslüm Bey, was responsible for many of the hardships endured by the Russians. As he was a Turk of a type

differing from those already introduced, he may be described in a few words. Muslūm was a soldier of the 'butcher' type, short, stocky, and brutal. It was said that he had fought with distinction in many campaigns, but war had destroyed any feelings of humanity he might ever have possessed. This was the devil who had British soldiers flogged with the *bastinado* on the smallest provocation; who stripped the British dead and had them thrown into a trench in the cemetery, twenty at a time, without a burial service, though a chaplain was present; who was addicted to vile and sensual crimes which even the Ottoman Government was forced to notice in the end. He was said to retain his lucrative post of Commandant because he could blackmail Enver Pasha for some assassinations which he, Muslūm, had done for the redoubtable Minister of War. But he was court-martialled at last, and dismissed from his post, being replaced by a Turkish officer who was also a gentleman. I never heard what was the fate of Muslūm Bey; but it is worthy of note that, in Turkey, a wealthy or influential officer, having served a sentence of imprisonment, can rejoin his unit and hold his former position. That, at least, was the state of affairs during the war, and illustrates the standard of honour in the Ottoman official circles of that period.

To view, *from within*, the collapse of an enemy country is a very interesting experience. It would be more than interesting—fascinating, in

fact—were it not for the personal inconvenience which this point of view entails. To watch the cankers of dissension, suspicion, and fear eating into the very heart of the foe ; to see the octopus of chaos encircling the administration with his tentacles and stifling its existence ; and all the while to know that this process of death is the breath of life to one's own dear land—these are Heaven indeed. The collapse of Turkey was sudden in the end, but circumstances had paved the way for it through the course of many months. Hatred of the Germans had taken a stronger and stronger hold on the Turkish heart. The Turk is no fool. He knew that the guns of the battleship *Goeben* were trained on his capital. He knew that, though there were fourteen thousand German troops scattered over Asia Minor, there were fourteen thousand more in Constantinople to deal with revolt. He could see that Enver Pasha and Talaat Pasha were obviously in the pay of Germany. And he realised that his country had become a victim to the German lust for world-dominion, and that, if Germany won, Turkey would cease to exist except as a vassal state.

One of the first signs of decay in Asia Minor was the slowing of communications. The Anatolian railway, administered and worked by the French and British before the war, became more and more disorganised when handed over to the control of the Turks, who are no mechanicians, whatever else they may be. Locomotives were damaged or wore out, but they were never

properly repaired or replaced. The line itself was rarely inspected, and the bridges and culverts failed. Train-loads became heavier and heavier as the sidings filled with disabled locomotives. I saw a train approaching Afium Karahissar in 1918 which managed to keep moving till within two miles of the town, where it met a very slight up-grade. There it stopped, and there it had to remain till the only locomotive at Afium could be sent to tow it in. This seemed to be a daily occurrence. At that time the train journey from Aleppo to Constantinople was a matter of weeks rather than days.

In June 1918, when the final German offensive in France had been brought to a standstill, the tone of the Ottoman newspapers began to change. We were always allowed to read the *Lloyd Ottoman* and the *Hilal*, and occasionally the *Suisse Libérale* when its opinions were not adverse to Germany. The *Lloyd Ottoman* and the *Hilal*, both printed in Constantinople, were obviously under German control, and they gave all the German communiqués. In these the Germans were clever enough to eschew absolutely false news, but to retard the publication of bad news and enlarge on any good tidings which might encourage poor Turkey. But the Turkish Press never *criticised* the Germans until the summer of 1918; and that beginning of public criticism, when it came, impressed me deeply with the change which was taking place in the country, and the waning power of Germany



to control Turkish opinion, even in the capital.

We could gauge, more or less, the good or ill fortune of the Entente armies by our treatment as prisoners. If things were going well for England, we were granted concessions and privileges; if ill, the Turks imposed new restrictions. It showed a despicable trait in the Ottoman character—the wish to curry favour always with the winning side. The motive for almost every action in Turkey was *fear*. Germany held a disappointed and seething Constantinople in subjection by fear. She had certainly bought both Enver and Talaat with gold, but she held them latterly by fear. Constantinople itself ruled the officials of the interior by fear; and those officials ruled the people by fear. It was in the summer of 1918, when the Germans were retreating before the hammer blows of the Entente armies in France, that a typically Ottoman order arrived from Constantinople and was posted in the camp at Afium Karahissar. It ran thus :

*'British prisoners are not to be annoyed.'*

We read it amid laughter and rejoicing. It was eloquent with meaning, for it spelt *fear*—fear of the might of Great Britain—and we knew that all was well.

News filtered through of dissensions in the Turkish Cabinet. The vain-glorious and ambitious Enver was no longer the idol of the people. Dark rumours of his trade in economic

concessions with the Germans filled the air ; and the prophecies of victory with which he had bolstered up his position, were falsified from day to day. He quarrelled openly with Talaat Pasha, and they both resigned their positions in September 1918. By that time the Entente armies in France were sweeping all before them, and the prestige of Germany was hopelessly shattered in the East. Gloom descended on Afium Karahissar, except in the prisoners' camps; but, piercing that gloom, was a ray of sunshine in the hearts of the people who saw at last the approaching end of the bloody warfare of past years. We, as prisoners, lived in a dream. As the days rolled on, and the papers still recorded success after success to our countries, thoughts of escape were banished and replaced by plans for approaching freedom. The Turks fawned upon us—there is no other word—and we demanded almost what we liked and it was granted. General Allenby had destroyed Djemal Pasha's 7th and 8th Armies in Syria, and was chasing the remnants of the 4th Army to Aleppo, where Mustapha Kemal was trying to make a stand ; the Turks were obliterated in Mesopotamia ; the Entente troops were streaming north from Salonika ; and then, in September 1918, Bulgaria threw up the sponge. That finished Turkey, and many of the German rats had no time to leave the sinking ship.

Only vague rumours reached us, at the time, of most of these stirring events, but the defection

of Bulgaria could not be hidden, and we knew that this heralded the end. In October we refused to collect outside our houses for roll-calls, but made the Turkish officers come in to count us, or merely showed a hand or foot at a window; and, early in November, the following notice was posted in the camp by the Commandant:

*'From to-morrow there will be no more roll-calls. Officers are requested to treat the peculiar circumstances with moderation.'*

And then we knew indeed that the war was ended as far as Turkey was concerned, though it was not till November 3rd that the armistice of October 30th was announced in Afiun Karahissar. Enver, Talaat, and other traitors had fled the country; and a mission headed by Raouf Bey, the Minister of Marine, had sued for peace on the British Admiral's flagship at Mudros.

The trains running through Afiun from the east were a wonderful sight. Liman von Sanders, the German Field-Marshal, was in the van of the flight from Syria, where he had barely escaped capture; and, following him, came long trains each day, packed to the point of suffocation with exhausted Turks and sullen Germans. I have never seen such trainloads. Not only were the carriages so full that the doors could scarcely be shut, but there were men clinging even to the roofs and standing on the footboards. The Germans, pistol in hand, were threatening all who wished to eject them, sometimes throwing men from the overloaded carriages to make room

for their own kit. They knew that their escape from Turkey was a matter of days only, and that even before they could pass Afium Karahissar the door might be shut at Constantinople.

Then the British fleet steamed proudly to the Golden Horn, and an order came from the Admiral in command that all British officers and soldiers were to be despatched at once by rail to Smyrna. This was shown by the Turkish Commandant to the senior British officer, who went post-haste to the railway-station to interview the station-master.

"I *order* you to have a train ready to leave for Smyrna to-morrow morning with the first batch of British," said he.

"But, sir," replied the Turk, "I do not know if it will be possible, as I have so few wagons and locomotives."

"That is *your* business, not mine," was the reply. "See that my order is carried out, or it may be the worse for you."

And that train was ready on the morrow.

Before I left Afium Karahissar on November 8th, I took several walks alone through the town. It was an interesting experience. I had expected to be greeted with scowls, and even with abuse, by the populace, but nothing of the sort occurred. One and all seemed relieved that the strain was over and wished to be friendly. The Armenians, in particular, were jubilant, and many of them talked to me for the mere pleasure of disobeying the recent Turkish regulation which had for-

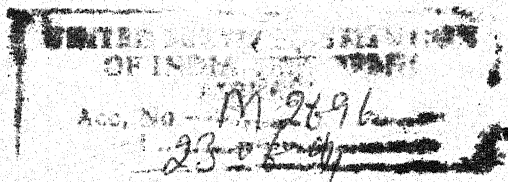
bidden conversation with prisoners.\* The Turks themselves looked upon Great Britain as their only chance of salvation, and wished us to carry home an impression which might influence our country in their favour. I felt almost lonely during those solitary walks in the crowded streets, and looked instinctively round for the attendant guard, so much are we the creatures of custom. Germans were rudely jostled by the Turks and Armenians, but the British were greeted with smiles and invited into shops to make purchases and drink coffee.

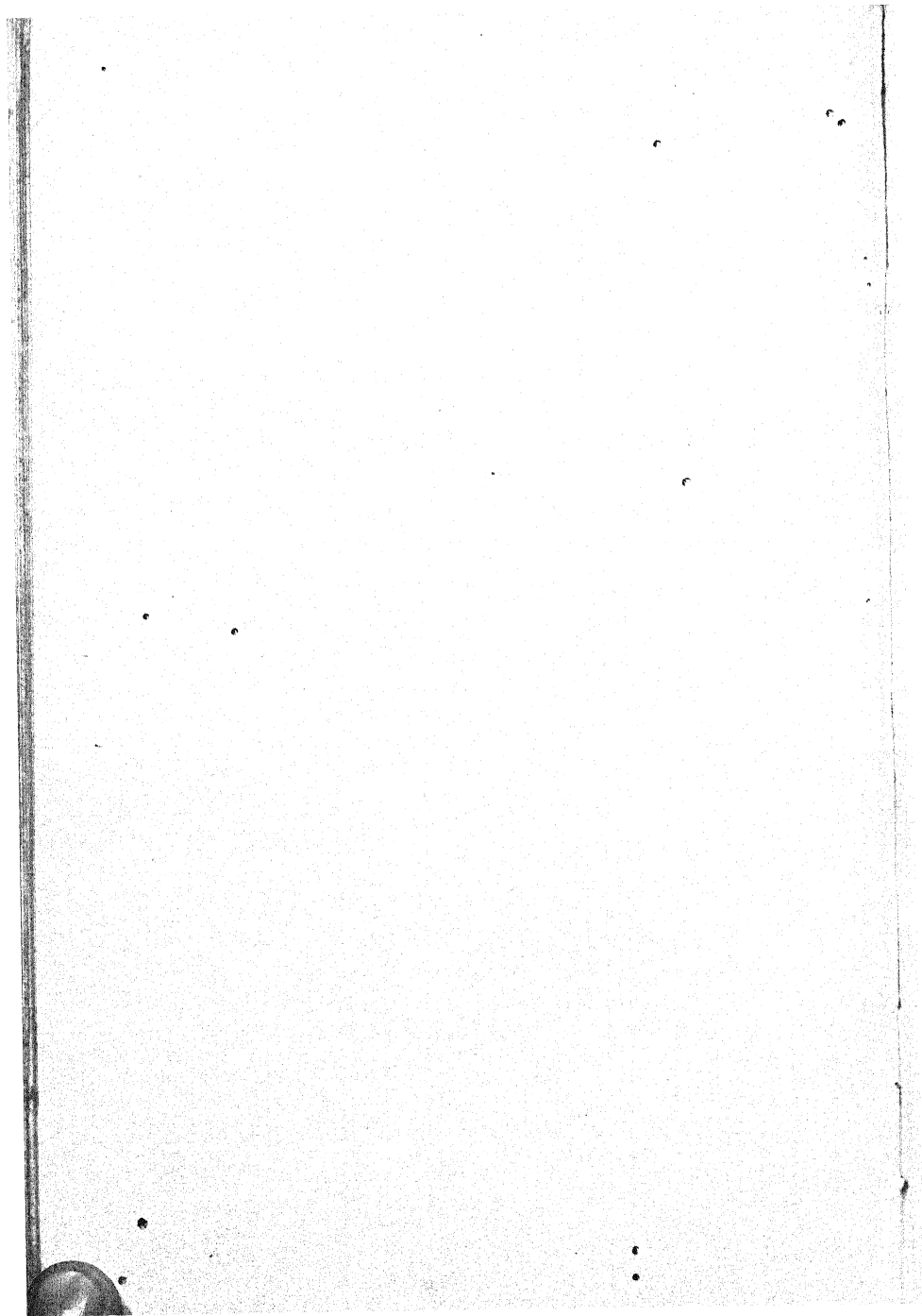
A few days later we reached Smyrna, where the Greek population turned out and waved to us as the train steamed through the city to the terminus. A British gunboat had crossed the minefields and was moored to the sea-front, and here once more we saw the dear old Union Jack flying in the breeze. There was great excitement in the city, and bitter feeling between the Greeks and Turks which threatened even then to lead to open rupture. The Greeks were jubilant and patronising ; the Turks, sullen and ferocious. It was the presence of the little British gunboat and her jolly sailors that made Smyrna safe. And while we were there, hospitably entertained by the American Missionary College at 'Paradise,' the glad news arrived of the armistice in France and the end of the war.

I left Smyrna on November 13th, 1918, in a British hospital-ship which had anchored outside the minefields, and in due course reached Egypt,

and finally England ; and since that day I have never seen a Turk. But there are memories which cannot be effaced, and among them those of this extraordinary people amid their wild and barren mountains. To what might Turkey attain if properly ruled, if rid of the corruption rampant in high places, if freed from perpetual war and thus able to develop her resources ? She has wealth, but it lies buried ; she has courage, but it is wasted in bloody war ; and she has the patience of Job. If a regenerate Turkey ever rises, like the Phoenix, from her ashes, she may regain some part of her former grandeur. And if in these tales of that distant land, I, a soldier and no scribe, have succeeded in illustrating, however poorly, some aspects of the Ottoman character, I shall feel that the signs of that possible regeneration will have more interest when, if ever, they appear.

THE END





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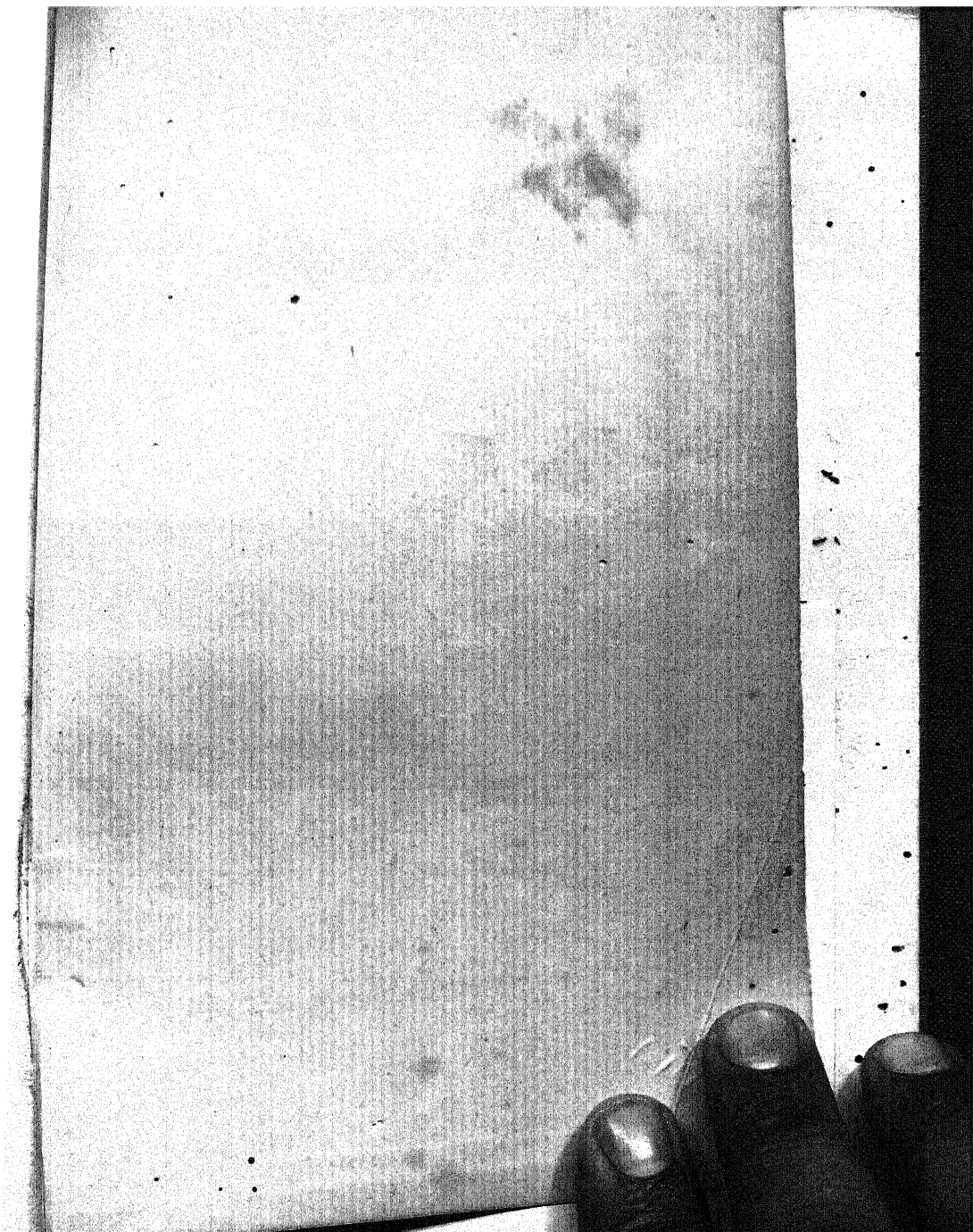
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